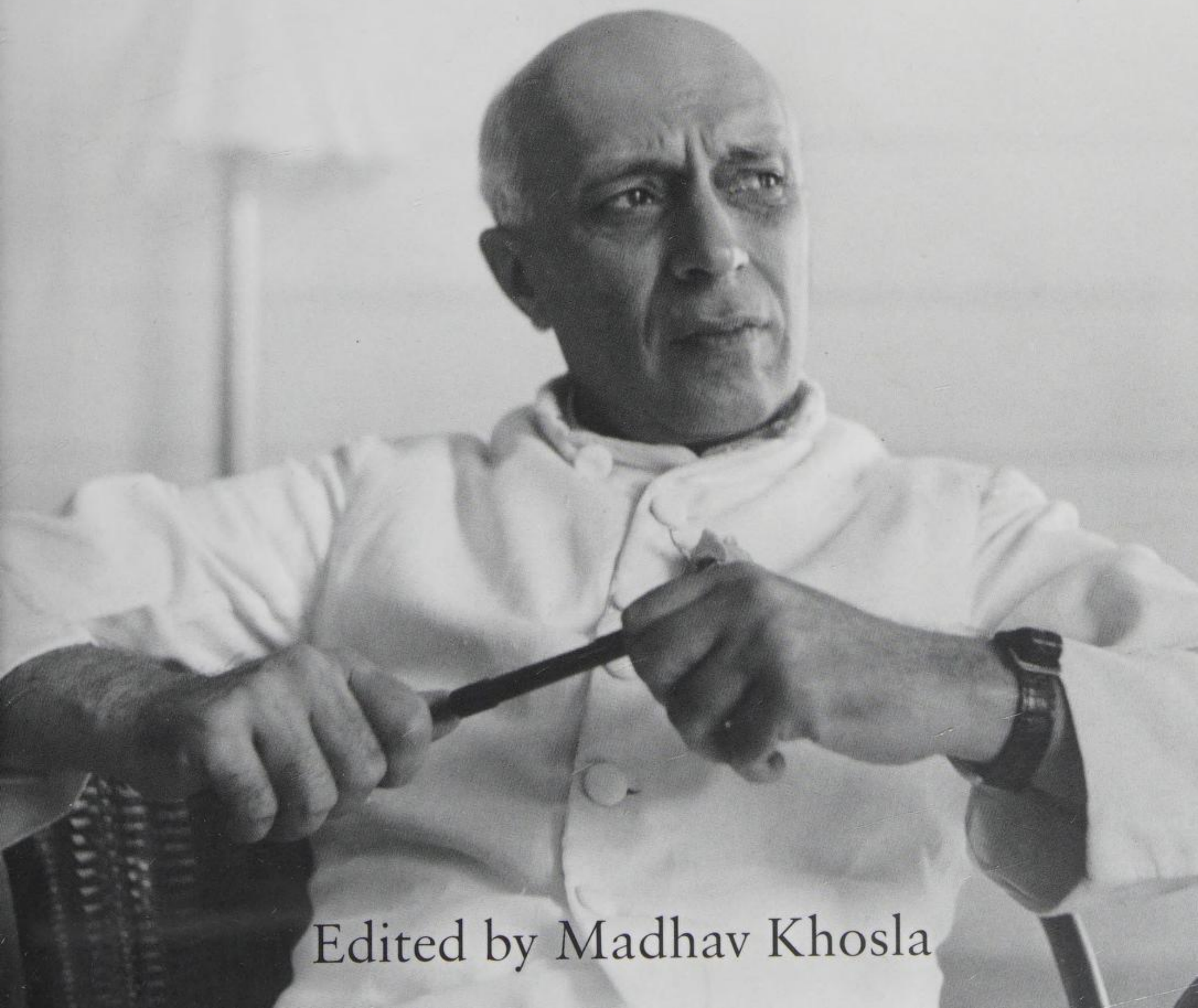
# LETTERS *for a* NATION

## From

## Jawaharlal Nehru

## to His Chief Ministers

## 1947–1963



Edited by Madhav Khosla

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In October 1947, two months after he became independent India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote the first of his fortnightly letters to the heads of the country's provincial governments—a tradition that he kept until his last letter in December 1963, only a few months before his death.

Carefully selected from among nearly 400 such letters, this collection covers a range of themes and subjects, including citizenship, war and peace, law and order, national planning and development, governance and corruption, and India's place in the world. The letters also cover momentous world events and the many crises and conflicts the country faced during the first sixteen years after Independence.

Visionary, wise and reflective, these letters are not just a testimony to Nehru's statesmanship and his deep engagement with every aspect of India's democratic journey, but are also of great contemporary relevance for the guidance they provide for our current problems and predicaments.

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Edited by Madhav Khosla

for Prof Tushnet,

With deep gratitude &

admiration,

Madhav

Feb 2015.

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# Introduction

'I was not much of a politician,' Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in *The Discovery of India*, 'although politics had seized me and made me its victim.'[1] A key figure in the freedom struggle and nationalist movement, a man who spent nearly a decade in prison before becoming independent India's first prime minister from 1947 to 1964, Nehru's life was in many ways defined in terms of his political career. Yet politics—a domain of pressing, ceaseless demands—offered an uneasy career for those like him who strove for self-reflection and sought careful scrutiny of their own actions. It was perhaps this feeling of never quite being at home in politics which repeatedly drove Nehru to better understand political action: its predicaments, its potential and its call for constant reinvention. It was in this vein that Nehru chose to write to heads of India's provincial governments on 15 October 1947, a mere two months after Independence.

'[I]t is in times of exceptional stress like the present,' he observed, 'that it is more than ordinarily incumbent on us to keep in close touch with each other, so that we can put forth concerted efforts

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2012 [Calcutta: Signet Press, 1946]), p. 386.

to overcome the grave dangers facing us.' Nehru proposed to 'form the habit of a fortnightly exchange of letters', and the letter of 15 October—the first of this exchange—initiated a political practice that he continued until a few months before his death in 1964. Barring the occasional lost deadline and several additional letters, Nehru wrote to his chief ministers on the 1st and 15th of each month and the fortnightly target was met with remarkable regularity. By the time Nehru wrote his final letter on 21 December 1963, nearly four hundred letters had been written.

Why were these letters written and what importance do they have? The home minister in Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* didn't know the answer. He wondered why Nehru bothered to write 'these well-meaning letters . . . every month to the Chief Ministers' which they 'are not delighted to read'. 'Do you know what they contain?', the minister caustically noted, 'Long homilies about Korea and the dismissal of General MacArthur. What is General MacArthur to us?—yet so noble and sensitive is our Prime Minister that he considers all the ills of the world to be his own. He means well about Nepal and Egypt and God knows what else, and expects us to mean well too. He doesn't have the least idea of administration but he talks about the kind of food committees we should set up.'[2] The minister was wrong about the frequency of the letters—they were fortnightly not monthly—but he rightly understood that they were unlike standard official correspondence and ordinary memoranda detailing the tasks of daily government. There are at least three reasons why they are significant.

The first is for an understanding of Nehru's political ideas. Of Nehru's writings, the most famous continue to remain his three books—*Glimpses of World History* (1934), *An Autobiography* (1936), and *The Discovery of India* (1946). These books cast light upon Nehru's

[2] Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 261.

thought. Through a majestic examination of the civilizations and personalities that shaped human history, *Glimpses* portrayed a world in which the forces of change were not monopolized by the West.[3] It was a powerful way to challenge the idea that certain countries could be written out of global history. *An Autobiography* captured not merely the hopes and disappointments that had fashioned Nehru's personal journey, but also his journey towards understanding the idea of freedom. Particularly important in this regard was Nehru's emphasis on economic liberation but also his concerns about Russia's violent revolutionary methods. 'I have been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition', he wrote, expressing dislike for 'much that has happened in Russia, and especially the excessive use of violence in normal times'.[4] He had a particular distaste for 'dogmatism, and the treatment of Karl Marx's writings or any other books as revealed scripture which cannot be challenged, and the regimentation and heresy hunts which seem to be a feature of modern communism'.[5] The third book, *The Discovery of India*, is a text often read as an argument for India's essential unity. Instead, Nehru was far more interested in emphasizing the transitory, contingent character of its current enslavement. Above all, however, it aimed at giving nationalism the narrative it needed. Imagining historical pasts was a strategy familiar

[3] In many ways, this prior claim of the importance of a non-Western world was the necessary premise for Nehru to delve into understanding his own country. As Ramachandra Guha has observed, the chronology of Nehru's books and the title *The Discovery of India* might suggest 'that perhaps [Nehru] was an internationalist well before he became a patriot, that he had discovered the world before he had discovered India'. Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Delhi: Picador, 2007), p. 794, n. 3.

[4] Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004 [London: John Lane, 1936]), p. 610.

[5] Ibid., p. 591.

to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indians, but no other attempt—whether it was Ambedkar's efforts to historically explain lower-caste oppression, or claims by economic nationalists to expose the financial costs of colonialism—could match the *Discovery* in its ambition and scale. Through an account of changing political fortunes it revealed the possibility of radical transformation of an entire nation.

Nehru's three books share important similarities—they are all rich in their turn to history, they were all written largely in jail, and, most importantly, they were all written before Independence. As a consequence, they do not process his role as prime minister, and provide an imperfect, if helpful, understanding of Nehru's political vision. The letters are crucial to an appreciation of that role. Although Nehru's writings before Independence demonstrate his commitment to political and economic freedom, it was only after Independence that he fully clarified the relationship between the two. While his commitment to socialism and his unease with violent communism was consistent throughout, his concerns broadened as prime minister to include the procedural and formal features of democratic rule. The inner workings of self-government received far greater attention than they had previously invited, and marked a phase in Nehru's life where the importance he placed on political freedom moderated a certain economic radicalism. This emphasis on political freedom shifted attention towards the means through which democracy could be consolidated. Now, as prime minister, Nehru was at pains to emphasize that democracies had no special claim to survival. They were as likely to succeed or fail as any other form of political association, and India's liberty was as contingent as its captivity had been. Indians could not merely adopt democracy; they would have to develop it.

Nehru's effort at creating norms for the exercise of public power sought to fortify the fragility he saw inherent in any political

experiment. Formal procedures and standards in the administration of democracy had more than ceremonial value—they sustained legitimacy, built public trust and cultivated restraint in public life. Sarvepalli Gopal, Nehru's distinguished biographer, once observed that the chief aspects of Nehru's thought were his romanticism and tendency to aestheticize, his faith in the perfectibility of man, his commitment to civil liberties, and his belief that the basic cause of conflicts was class differences.[6] To Gopal's list, we might add a fifth feature—Nehru's sense that democratic success in India would ultimately rest neither on radical institutional design which could magically work itself nor on any one special personality. It would instead be based on the cementing of conventions that were deeper than any single individual or institution. From efforts at public reasoning and justifying individual actions to resisting immediate, seductive solutions, Nehru showed nation-building to be a prosaic affair demanding infinite patience, one whose processes and institutions could only endure through cumulative acts of consolidation.[7] *Making* a nation, rather than merely administering it, was Nehru's unique responsibility. The letters not only analyse that enterprise of nation-building—they themselves were part of its ingredients.

A second reason, therefore, why the letters matter is for the historical record they provide. Through detailing the trials and errors, the events and personalities, and the hopes and challenges

[6] Sarvepalli Gopal, 'The Mind of Jawaharlal Nehru' in *Imperialists, Nationalists, Democrats: The Collected Essays*, ed. Srinath Raghavan (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2013), pp. 171–203.

[7] For a recent discussion of Nehru's efforts at democratic consolidation, see Ashutosh Varshney, *Battles Half Won: India's Improbable Democracy* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2013), pp. 25–29, 45–63. On Nehru's emphasis on reasoning in particular, see Sunil Khilnani, 'Nehru's Faith', *Economic and Political Weekly* 4793 (30 November 2002).

of the first sixteen years of independent India, they provide us with an indispensable account of the time.[8] The letters begin as independent India did, preoccupied with Partition violence and the threat and tragedy of communal carnage; mass migration and the largest refugee crisis in human history; the troubled integration of Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir; right-wing extremism and the assassination of Gandhi; left-wing extremism and communist violence; the food emergency, and the drafting of a constitution. They proceed to cover domestic landmarks like India's first general elections, and international efforts at refashioning global politics such as the Bandung Conference. Economic planning and state-directed development are given special emphasis throughout. Both planning and development found concrete shape in the five-year plans, the first two of which underscored the importance of agriculture and industrialization respectively. India's relations with the world are similarly highlighted including its association with China and the war of 1962. Several crises and tensions that occupy Nehru—from the rights of minorities to limitations in state capacity to the ongoing tensions with Pakistan—surface repeatedly in the letters, as they did during Nehru's prime ministership. Because of their fortnightly character, the letters painstakingly catalogue the nation's journey from 1947 to 1963. As such, they are the inevitable starting point for the history of independent India.

The letters were written with authority but they were not instructions. Part of their charm lies in Nehru's emphasis on 'concerted efforts' and coordinated action. There is hardly any sense of Nehru being largely unchallenged, as in fact he was, during

[8] Nehru was prime minister for seventeen years but no letter was written in 1964, his final year.

his term. Within the Congress party, he faced little competition after Sardar Patel's death in 1950 and Purushottam Das Tandon's resignation as party president in 1951. At the national level, the Nehru years saw an eclectic mix of Opposition parties—the Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the Swatantra Party—but none offered any sustained political resistance to the Congress. The Opposition presence in the Lok Sabha in the three elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962 never really crossed the quarter mark. And it took a decade after Independence when, with the Communist victory in Kerala in 1957, India got its first non-Congress state government. It is this unrivalled power which makes so striking Nehru's self-description in the letters as being merely the first among equals.

Initially published in five chronologically arranged volumes almost three decades ago, the letters have long been out of print and nearly impossible to procure. This one-volume anthology is an attempt to invite greater attention towards them. Its themes confront dilemmas that resemble those of contemporary India—the third reason for their importance. By embracing challenges that we still face, the letters are essential reading for our time.

This volume is organized around five big themes—citizenship, democratic institutions, national planning and development, war and peace, and the international order. Within each theme, we observe the development of Nehru's thinking and the key moments in independent India's initial years. In December 1946, speaking before the Constituent Assembly, Nehru had observed that 'one of the unfortunate legacies of the past has been that there has been no

imagination in the understanding of the Indian problem'.[9] At the moment itself, Nehru gave only indications of what he meant, though in other writings he elaborated upon his impression, imagining into existence an India that was limited by neither mainstream global truths nor its own recent past.[10] An issue on which India would challenge conventional Western thinking, not to mention the Imperial mind, was the very adoption of democracy with universal suffrage. In a country that was poor, socially fragmented and diverse, and illiterate and unschooled in the art of self-government, democratic government was no ordinary experiment.

Before India could be governed, however, its citizens would have to be constituted—a major challenge in a country riven by religion, language and caste. India's Constitution grandly embraced a transcendental ideal of citizenship free from particular identities, but it was Nehru who as prime minister politically policed the relationship between the citizen and the nation. This responsibility came at Independence itself, and in the aftermath of Partition Nehru saw India threatened by 'reactionary forces and communal organisations', like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and overwhelmed by the refugee crisis. Nehru's response to communal violence and religious extremism had several dimensions. Above all was the formal institutional structure of the state. Despite having grown up with 'hazy notions' of religion, as he wrote in *An Autobiography*, he remained unequivocal about its place in public life.[11] Delinking state action from religious considerations, keeping the army and public services free from communal concerns, and ensuring that the

[9] Jawaharlal Nehru, Speech in the Constituent Assembly, 13 December 1946, in *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. 1 (Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 2009 [1950]), p. 64.

[10] On Nehru's national vision, see Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1997); Guha, *India After Gandhi*.

[11] Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 8.

enforcement of law and order was strict and unbiased, all formed part of this overarching vision of 'a secular State in which men of all communities can walk with their heads high'.

For Nehru, only such a state could reconcile collective action with individual freedom. The principal failing of both Americans and Communists had been to impose an identity, to 'demand uniformity and submission to their way of thinking and life'. A model of citizenship liberated from identity politics also had consequential benefits and allowed the state to be effective. India's primary problem, he felt, was economic, and meeting it demanded a unified vision. 'If separatist and sectarian ideas increase, they make it difficult to tackle that principal [economic] problem. If chaotic conditions exist in some parts of the country, then the energy of the nation is largely absorbed in dealing with them, and other matters, however important, become secondary.' Nehru himself noticed the helplessness of the state in situations of social conflict. 'We appear to live somewhere near the top of a volcano and any spark tends to waken it into eruption', he wrote while agonizing over the 'vicious circle' of actions and reactions that a communalized politics had engendered. At times, especially during the mutual migrations between East and West Bengal in 1950, we see Nehru painfully accepting his own powerlessness: 'I am filled with deep distress and a sense of failure . . . We cannot run away from the task that history has set for us. But a cruel destiny seems to pursue us and nullify all our efforts'.

The nature of this crisis made Nehru notice that the problem at hand was not merely political but also psychological. In earlier writings, Nehru had regarded such conflicts as simply representing underlying class struggles. While he still retained this belief, he now began to pay far greater attention to the psychological aspect of citizenship. 'The basic problem for us today,' he wrote in 1953, 'is to build up a united India in the real and inner sense of the word,

that is, a psychological integration of our people.' From expressing horror over groups being asked to demonstrate loyalty to ruminating over the decline of Urdu to investigating the absence of minorities in public employment, Nehru began to underscore the informal means and emotional burden of exclusion. In East Bengal, for instance, he found 'the most unfortunate feature is the utter demoralization of the Hindus' and considered the foremast task to be the removal of fear and growth in confidence. Similarly, he found it counter-productive, if not dangerous, to force cultural assimilation upon India's north-eastern region. Any assimilation must be natural rather than imposed, he believed, and only efforts at retaining the individual cultures of different regions could accord those regions full status.

Nehru regarded majoritarian communalism to be especially dangerous. This was partly because of the contingent historical facts at the time, but also because majoritarian communalism could claim to represent the entire nation. Yet, Nehru approached the citizenship question with fierce consistency, regardless of which section of the population, and what particular issue, it implicated. He expressed concern over the lack of women in Parliament and minimal representation of religious minorities in the public services but refused caste-based or communal reservations. Such tools were merely another form of identity politics, and unlike providing education they were 'some kind of crutches which do not add to the strength or health of the body'. The four decades of crisis over representation before Partition, which Nehru saw as closely as anyone, had convinced him of the inherent instability of a politics built on identity. No formulation between different groups could ever be satisfactory, and the internal logic of such an enterprise would necessarily create further divisions rather than cement ties. The only option, Nehru emphasized, was a politics which could rise above claims of special representation and thereby be plural. It was

'a narrow and deplorable nationalism' that always reduced issues to identity, Nehru observed, when debates arose over Tenzing's nationality and whether he reached the top of Everest before Hillary. Rather than developing some ad hoc system of balancing communities against one another—a syndrome that persists in various forms to this day—it is Nehru who, in a form of liberal rationality rare in Indian politics, tried to purge politics entirely of considerations like religion, language and caste. Only a politics based and practised on entirely different terms could enable India to be 'not only a protecting force but a liberating one'.

Liberation for Nehru could only take place through self-government, and democracy was the only form of political association he ever countenanced. Although committed to it from the start, Nehru's writings before Independence focused more on economic development than on the specific institutional elements of democratic rule. This changed upon his assuming office, and as prime minister Nehru emphasized that democracy was about processes and not 'just some structure which a Constitution builds up'. Acutely aware that the major responsibility for cementing conventions would be on him and his chief ministers, Nehru urged them to realize that 'what our governments are doing today will set the tone for future administrations. The very powers that may be exercised, perhaps for adequate reasons today, may be exercised later for totally inadequate and perhaps even for objectionable reasons.'

Conventions mattered across a range of fields, but perhaps most when it came to the coercive power of the state. Nehru expressed alarm, for instance, at detention without trial. He was worried that once such extreme measures are employed they tend to become standard practice in governance. Similarly, he voiced shock at growing police firings, which he urged his chief ministers to investigate with a special, and not merely departmental, inquiry.

The use of repressive methods like these, Nehru feared, would only encourage their further use and tempt politicians to find easy solutions in hard times. The relationship between institutions also helped shape conventions. Thus the decision to limit the judiciary's authority to review executive action, even if appearing sensible at the time, was an act which Nehru found 'fraught with grave consequences'. Similarly, on the First Amendment to the Constitution, which enabled radical land reform (but also narrowed the free speech guarantee), Nehru never chided the courts for the decisions which the amendments sought to undo. He felt that they had a duty to interpret the Constitution; the amendments were justified not because judges had been wrong but because the Constitution lacked the flexibility necessary for drastic social reform.

In enacting this Amendment, Nehru deferred to procedure, publically explained and defended the reasons for the measure, and incorporated Opposition concerns by adopting the qualifier that the restrictions be 'reasonable'. Yet, the Amendment has served to grant the state much more presumptive power than Nehru anticipated. While this was a vice less visible during his years, the enactment embraced an instrumental attitude towards legal change whose disciplined usage rested too heavily upon the sensibility of those in office. Although this was indeed one of Nehru's blind spots, his overall attention to institutional culture is salient throughout the letters. While recognizing that Governors have a narrow role to play in any parliamentary system and limited ultimate power, he urged his chief ministers to keep them formally informed and abreast of political developments. Despite his clear frustration at the conduct of the Communist Party, he urged his chief ministers to resist taking action against them on ideological grounds and to limit coercive responses to cases involving violence. While believing that Shanmukham Chetty—who as finance minister was allegedly

corrupt—was innocent and instead exercised poor judgement, he accepted his resignation on the grounds that only the highest standards for conduct were acceptable in public life.

In his efforts at establishing institutional cultures, we notice Nehru's instinctive rejection of the immediate and the expedient. At times, this very characteristic of Nehru's is interpreted differently to suggest that he dithered in decision-making; that he failed to notice the urgency of particular moments. Such a critique confuses attention to form with vacillation; it does not fully capture Nehru's anxieties about the use of public power, and his warning in the letters to 'not allow ourselves to be led astray by momentary passion'.[12] In addition to this, Nehru had a further worry. Democracies, he feared, had an odd capacity to encourage false optimism. Merely because the overall system was considered fair, its participants might be led to believe that things were proceeding according to plan and thus lose sight of the transformative potential of democratic politics. Concerns with complacency permeate the letters, with Nehru identifying the ultimate danger that we 'become static in our minds and smug in our approach'. Comfort was a peculiar but real problem, especially after freedom had been achieved, and the greatest delusion was for politicians to 'imagine that all is well in this best of all possible worlds'.

Complacency concerned Nehru because he was never satisfied with mere formal electoral practices. Such practices may guarantee self-government but freedom would be incomplete without more substantive socio-economic outcomes. In *Glimpses of World History*, Nehru had expressed his enthralment with Soviet-style national planning. It was a fascination that never dimmed. 'As I threw in

[12] For a detailed exploration of this feature of Nehru's judgement, see Sunil Khilnani, 'Nehru's Judgment' in *Political Judgment: Essays for John Dunn*, eds Richard Bourke and Raymond Geuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 254–77.

some concrete,' he wrote to his chief ministers while recalling the Hirakud Dam inauguration, 'a sense of adventure seized me and I forgot for a while the many troubles that beset us.' The one lesson that Nehru took from world history, especially from Russia and Japan, was the significance of economic self-sufficiency and planning. At Independence, the major crisis facing India was food shortage. This crisis involved production but it also implicated distribution. Without an effective state machinery to distribute food, increased production would achieve little. Further, some Indian states boasted of a surplus in foodgrains and Nehru bemoaned their indifference towards the national problem and inability to recognize the interdependence between states. In the short-term, food shortages could only be met by imports. But such an approach consumed resources and prevented greater investment in development, thereby cautioning Nehru against its employment in the long run. The letters pay much attention to this particular crisis, along with others such as rising prices, and on each issue Nehru consistently reminded his chief ministers of the importance of statistics and accurate data, of the dangers of extemporized decisions, and of the elements of an overall planned approach towards economic progress.

Centralized planning in Nehru's time had much to recommend it. The Soviets had witnessed tremendous growth; and planning, Nehru wrote with conviction in 1953, 'has now become inevitable and even the ardent exponents of private enterprise in the United States of America have been compelled to accept planning, more especially in underdeveloped countries'. Planning could not only advance Indians on vital welfare indicators but also channelize their energies. In doing so, it could rescue them from 'the crooked paths of provincialism, communalism, casteism and all other disruptive and disintegrating tendencies'. This economic vision was driven less by a preconceived doctrine and more by a pragmatic calculation of

how best to alleviate poverty. In a speech in the Lok Sabha in 1956 Nehru refused to define socialism because he sought to avoid 'any rigid or doctrinaire thinking'. 'Even in my life,' he observed, 'I have seen the world change so much that I do not want to confine my mind to any rigid dogma.'[13] At various moments in the letters, Nehru would demonstrate his greater interest in efficiency rather than state control. So, for example, 'controls, in order to be effective, should not be spread out all over the place thus making for ineffectiveness and a great deal of harassment. Effective control means control of strategic points and allowing free trade in limited areas.'

Nehru saw that both capitalism and socialism had changed from their original forms. 'Marx has been proved right in his analysis in many ways, but he has also been proved wrong in other ways', he wrote, and although 'there is much talk in communism of the contradictions of capitalist society . . . we see the growing contradictions within the rigid framework of communism itself'. His economic vision was about recalibrating the relationship between power and sovereignty in a world where all traditional theoretical positions had, at some level, failed. They had either been unable to uplift people from poverty or were guilty of raising economic standards by diminishing civil liberties. Nehru sought to resist both a focus on mere procedural democracy as well as an instrumental approach centred on ends. He termed this approach a 'social democracy' rather than socialism or communism.

In hindsight, Nehru may have taken too narrow a view of society and individual freedom and too generous a view of the state. But the question he was trying to answer—of how to boost growth and reach welfare outcomes through democratic means—was a

[13] Jawaharlal Nehru, Speech in the Lok Sabha, 23 May 1956, cited in Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Anthology*, ed. Sarvepalli Gopal (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 313.

hard one; and, in those times, with the existing challenges and the intellectual resources on offer, it would have been nearly impossible to come up with an answer that did not grant some major role to the state. In reading the letters and the constraints of Nehru's times, one cannot help wonder whether the Indian economy's lost decades were not in fact the Nehru years but the ones that immediately followed.

From 1947 to 1963, Nehru was not only India's prime minister but also its foreign minister. War and peace and India's place in the world occupied a major part of his thinking during these years. In office, Nehru had to confront the exercise of military power early, with an armed invasion into Kashmir only months after Independence, the messy incorporation of the princely states of Junagadh and Hyderabad, and the refugee crisis and violence in East and West Bengal in 1950. The most notable, or rather infamous, of all of Nehru's military encounters was the 1962 war with China, whose defeat humiliated both the nation and the man.

Nehru's writings on these topics are varied, noting both immediate facts and events as well as tracking long-term global trends. We see, for instance, Nehru's firm opposition to a feudal Hyderabad in a democratic India, his disappointment over the 'active partisanship' involving Kashmir at the United Nations, and his enduring belief in the futility of great power politics. The one facet of his thinking which is most sharply revealed is his reluctance to use military power. 'We shall avoid war', Nehru wrote during the emerging governance failure in Hyderabad, 'because war is a frightful thing and comes in the way of progress and leaves bitter trails behind it'. Despite its imperfections, he expressed great support for the 1950 agreement with Liaquat Ali Khan that intended to bring sanity to the endless

violence in East and West Bengal. The only alternative was armed conflict and, rather than criticize Pakistan, India had a responsibility to demonstrate its own commitment to the spirit of the agreement: 'We have to save ourselves not only from what Pakistan might do or not do, but also from ourselves.' Nehru would consistently hold this line in discussing Pakistan, emphasizing that 'we may do a great deal of injury to Pakistan and might defeat it in war. But both countries will in effect be ruined if that extreme-step had to be taken.' War, in Nehru's view, was to be avoided not because India would be conquered in battle but, in a judgement independent of those calculations, it was to be resisted because both sides stood to lose.

In later years, Nehru would revisit this belief in comprehending the China war. From his writings before Independence, such as in *Glimpses* and *Discovery*, it is clear that Nehru viewed China through favourable and friendly eyes. Both India and China were ancient civilizations whose journey had been interrupted by foreign powers, and both were now making their way into the modern world. This viewpoint persisted in the years after Independence. Zhou Enlai's visit to India in 1954 was, Nehru informed his chief ministers, 'a major event for Asia, and, perhaps, even for the world'. Both countries had been liberated from domination and each was now trying 'to recover its own individuality'. Both would act in concert to renegotiate Asia's global importance and the major difference between them was reduced to one of style: India's path had been democratic whereas China had gone the communist way; it had 'followed a harsher and more violent course'.

Given this admiration for China, it is not hard to see why, even though tensions between India and China had been steadily rising, the 1962 war came as a real surprise for Nehru. Even in 1959, while spotting growing strains in the relationship, he did not believe that 'we should get alarmed in the present or fear any serious consequences'.

Much ink has now been spilt on identifying the reasons for the war and India's defeat. Factors ranging from professional military incompetence to the constraining character of domestic political pressure to Nehru's blindness towards Chinese ideology are all now regarded as having a role.[14] In the letters themselves, Nehru recognized India's military failings but did not reduce the event to defence capabilities. Instead, he understood China's actions as motivated by its larger global ambitions and the wider currents of international politics: 'The removal of India as a power which has become an obstacle in the way of China becoming a great power, became the primary objective of Chinese policy, and the elimination of non-alignment became particularly important from China's viewpoint. China wanted to show that Soviet policy was wrong.' China, for him, had 'repudiated the doctrine of peaceful co-existence' and India had been part of an event to polarize American and Soviet blocs.[15]

Here we encounter Nehru's mode of rationalization: the historical error nations had committed in international relations was to believe that power must be balanced, that military muscle determined strength, and that through mutually adjusted capabilities peace would emerge. The mistake of the attempt to balance power, Nehru felt, was that it failed on its own terms. Any such effort was bound to involve nations in ever-escalating situations which, in due course, they would be entirely unable to manage. They would provoke rather than balance one another, leading to growing distrust and insecurity rather than peace. For Nehru, the Cold War confirmed this

[14] On the 'lack of strategic judgment on the part of the professional military', see Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), p. 272.

[15] On the importance of this letter in light of alternative theories for China's actions, see Ramachandra Guha, 'An Asian Clash of Civilizations? The Sino-Indian Conflict Revisited' in *Patriots and Partisans* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 149–79.

diagnosis. The Soviet Union was driven by 'a war psychosis', the West was crippled with fear, and both blocs had locked themselves into a mutually destructive cycle. It was this framework of global politics which Nehru sought to escape, and his vision involved major efforts at international diplomacy.[16] 'Mere piling up of armaments,' he once wrote to his chief ministers, 'does not create a balance. It adds to the fear that leads to hatred and utter lack of understanding.' Nehru's criticism of the balance-of-power thesis and call for international collaboration did not stem from a naive belief that nations lacked self-interest. Instead, it emerged from recognizing a new world which was 'much more closely knit together than ever before' and had 'greater facilities for peaceful progress as well as for wholesale destruction'. In this changed universe, nations would collaborate not because they didn't care enough for themselves but precisely because they did—it was self-interest which would motivate them. As Nehru put it in 1959, 'I do not like the idea of continuing tension and potential conflict between India and China. This is not because I am enamoured of China, but because I am enamoured of India and of peace.'

It was this belief that self-interest would drive cooperation which, Nehru now admitted with agony, China did not share. This intellectual context is important because it clarifies Nehru's realism. In reacting to the major international events of his time—Dutch actions in Indonesia, North Korea's invasion of South Korea and the American and Chinese response, the invasions of Tibet and of Turkey by China and the Soviet Union respectively—Nehru was often accused of both hypocrisy and idealism. His non-alignment policy,

[16] For a recent conceptual examination of Nehru's attitude towards international diplomacy, see Andrew Bingham Kennedy, *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru: National Efficacy Beliefs and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

the international diplomatic conferences with Asian and African leaders, the five principles of peaceful coexistence (*panchsheel*) were all thought to hide his real intentions or to reveal his blindness to brute power. It is hard to deny that his vision sometimes led to an untidy application of non-alignment, to unwarranted trust in international actors, and to underestimating the stubbornness of the balance-of-power paradigm. But it did attempt to challenge the premises of global politics in radical ways, and the idea that self-interest and mutual benefit can coexist has, since Nehru's time and the rise of international political economy, found fresh importance.

The final part of this volume covers a somewhat different terrain, containing excerpts on the passing away of national figures and political colleagues. Nehru regarded the death of men like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Asaf Ali and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai to be of national significance, each of their lives capturing a moment in Indian history that was worthy of pause. Gandhi's assassination was the most devastating, depriving Nehru of a rare companionship, the strength and intimacy of which he would never again experience. Sardar Patel's death, even if personally less traumatic, had the greatest immediate and practical significance. It robbed a fragile and delicate government of a strong leader with great administrative skills. Asaf Ali, ambassador-minister in Switzerland, and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, a union minister, played their parts in colonial and independent India but were less notable figures. Of their death, Nehru could write in more personal terms. With both men he shared time in jail, and the three years in confinement with Asaf Ali in Ahmednagar prison exposed each to the best and worst of the other. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was a pillar in his new Cabinet, a man more focused on organizational

work rather than public speaking, whose popularity was the product of 'sheer hard work and ability'.

Nehru wrote of the death of these men with great feeling, in words that depart from matters of governance and the primary concerns of the letters. But he also used their passing to reflect upon larger themes in Indian politics. Gandhi's death, a source of 'shock and unutterable pain', illustrated the costs of a politics built on hatred and anger. Would Indians manage, not merely to be restrained in their reaction to his loss, but to display a degree of reciprocity towards one another? Patel's departure was a reminder of the urgent need for action and discipline. Those committed to nation-building had no opportunity for lethargy and self-satisfaction. Asaf Ali was a fine mix of tradition and modernity, symbolic of 'the old variegated culture of Delhi' which Nehru found to be fast vanishing. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai's enterprising spirit was a loss not merely to his friends but to the nation because 'we have come to a stage in India when initiative and daring are necessary more than ever'. Nehru had woven each of these lives into a larger narrative of modern India, and in each lay signs of its varying challenges and possibilities.

Varying as those challenges and possibilities were, they remain as much of our time as they were of Nehru's. From the particularistic challenges of citizenship to the demands of effective state machinery to the absence of probity in public life, the letters navigate webs that mirror our current predicaments and offer us a historical record that speaks to the present. Yet, their ultimate appeal may be found not so much in the content of their concerns but in the principles and sensibility that Nehru brought to their resolution. The substance and the sobriety of Nehru's governing principles find themselves forgotten in the boisterousness of contemporary India. Nehru himself remains a somewhat tragic figure—his failures made fantastic, his achievements and trials glossed over, and his commitment to

public life too distant from us to recover.[17] The achievements of his years, even when acknowledged, are regarded as 'more contextual than personal', a function of favourable circumstances rather than embedded principles.[18] The greatest talent of those in government, Rousseau once observed, is 'to lead the state so peacefully that it appears not to need leaders'.[19] Perhaps, ironically enough, it is Nehru's quiet achievements which explain his limited contemporary appeal. At this critical moment in India's history, when economic growth has unleashed unfathomable energy and democratic aspirations have displaced old political idioms, it is worth remembering the ideals of Nehru's India—a liberal society structured around individual freedom, a state respectful of procedures and norms, a model of leadership where strength and self-inquiry might cohere—and the power and meaning they once held.

[17] On Nehru's legacy, see Ramachandra Guha, 'Verdicts on Nehru: The Rise and Fall of a Reputation' in *Patriots and Partisans*, pp. 123–48.

[18] Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 33.

[19] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*, in *Rousseau: The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 11 (para 22).

# The Call for 'Concerted Efforts': Nehru's First Letter

New Delhi
15 October, 1947

My dear Prime Minister,*

I suggested to you about the middle of August that you should write to me a letter every fortnight and I promised to write back to you in return. I hoped by this means to keep in touch with important developments in your province and also to keep you informed not merely of the more significant developments in the Centre but also of events in other provinces which have repercussions over the rest of India. Neither of us has been able to keep up to this programme. I have, of course, had correspondence with some provincial Governors and Prime Ministers, but this has been spasmodic and confined to specific issues. We have all of us, I fear, been somewhat overwhelmed

* The heads of the provincial governments were designated as prime ministers or premiers till the adoption of the Constitution on 26 January 1950. Thereafter, they were termed chief ministers and the provinces were called states.

by the pressure of events since the 15th August. Yet it is in times of exceptional stress like the present that it is more than ordinarily incumbent on us to keep in close touch with each other, so that we can put forth concerted efforts to overcome the grave dangers facing us. I propose, therefore, that we should form the habit of a fortnightly exchange of letters and I intend to write to you on the 1st and 15th of each month. This, of course, does not mean that you should not write to me oftener, if you felt it necessary to do so.

I doubt if people realise—particularly in those provinces which fortunately have not felt the impact of the Punjab tragedy—the gravity and full significance of recent events. If the disturbances had not been halted in western U.P., they would eventually have spread eastwards right up to Bihar and West Bengal, and the whole of northern India would have been in chaos. Nor could the forces of disorder have, in that case, been kept confined to northern India. We would then have faced, quite apart from the butchery of innocent lives and the destruction of property, wholesale disruption of communications, disorganisation in food supply and the spread of epidemic diseases. We would, in fact, have faced complete chaos in the country and the destruction of all constitutional government. We have overcome this danger. Unceasing vigilance is still necessary and we have many grave problems confronting us, but I feel I can tell you that we have turned the corner and are in a position to face the future with confidence.

There are some aspects of the present situation to which I would draw your attention. I have mentioned them in some of my public statements, but they are so important that I make no apology for reiterating them.

I know there is a certain amount of feeling in the country—how strong it is in your province you can judge better than I can—that

the Central Government has somehow or other been weak and following a policy of appeasement towards Muslims. This, of course, is complete nonsense. There is no question of weakness or appeasement. We have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want to, go anywhere else. They have got to live in India. That is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilised manner. We must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic State. If we fail to do so, we shall have a festering sore which will eventually poison the whole body politic and probably destroy it. Moreover, we are now on a severe trial in the international forum. I have it on the authority of our delegates to the U.N.O. that the friendliness towards India which existed before the recent tragedy has changed and we are looked upon with distrust and almost with a certain degree of contempt. We cannot afford to ignore this feeling. We are dependent for many things on international goodwill—increasingly so since partition. And pure self-interest, apart from moral considerations, demands that world opinion should be on our side in this matter of treatment of minorities.

I would ask you, therefore, as a matter of great importance, to take steps to put across to the public the true basis of our policy. How exactly you should do so is a matter which I must leave to your judgment; it must depend on local factors.

The other important question to which I would draw your attention is the paramount importance of preserving the public services from the virus of communal politics.

There is a great deal of evidence that the services in Pakistan have got out of hand and are not amenable to the control of their

government. You will have noticed that Mr. Jinnah* himself referred, in a recent address in Karachi, to the indiscipline that has set in in the services.† This is already a serious headache for Pakistan, and will probably be more serious in future. Fortunately for us, taking an overall picture, we have been fortunate in this respect and we have been able, generally speaking, to preserve the integrity of the services against the communal virus. But there have been lapses in East Punjab specially in the police; and unless we are vigilant the disease may spread. We would then be faced with a situation of the utmost gravity, viz., of having a government in office which could not get its decrees executed by its own servants; the sort of thing that is happening so frequently in the South American Republics. I would ask you, therefore, to allow no laxity in the loyal execution of government's policy by its servants, particularly in the matter of just and fair treatment to minorities. If we condone lapses in this respect, we shall be storing up serious trouble for the country in the future.

We have been so preoccupied with problems arising out of the disturbances in the Punjab that we have been able to give hardly any time to other problems of almost equal urgency. Our economic position is really quite serious. There has been a marked rise in prices during the last twelve months; and since the war ended the rise in prices has been 57 points. The movement has been rather rapid in recent months, for between January and the middle of August this

* M.A. Jinnah (1876–1948), president of the Muslim League, 1916, 1920 and from 1934 till his death; Governor General of Pakistan, 1947–48.

† Addressing the senior officers on 11 October 1947, Jinnah said, 'I was pained to learn that a good many of our staff are not pulling their weight. . . . Some of them have been demoralised by the happenings in East Punjab and Delhi, and in others, the general lawlessness prevailing in some parts of the country has bred a spirit of indiscipline. These tendencies, if not checked, immediately will prove more deadly than our external enemies and will spell ruin on us.'

year, the wholesale price index rose by 28 points. The rise in retail prices has probably been larger. This has not been due to any increase in currency—in fact, the total volume of money in circulation, whether currency or bank deposits, has slightly fallen since the end of the war—but to a fall in the production of consumable goods. I am afraid we have been losing all along the line in textiles, in steel and various other basic commodities. There seems also no end to our dependence on overseas sources for our food supplies. The only solution to this problem is increased production. This means both a positive drive towards that end and vigilant steps against anything that hampers production, such as strikes and lock-outs. We have set up here a sub-committee of the Cabinet to examine and make recommendations regarding the machinery which will enable us to deal effectively with economic problems. This sub-committee is meeting shortly and I will keep you informed of any major recommendations which are likely to be of interest to provinces. In the meanwhile, I would ask you to keep this matter prominently in mind and see that every possible step is taken which would increase production and reverse the spiral process now so dangerously in evidence.

I would like to draw your attention to the letter from the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation No. R. & R.1 (1) dated the 23rd September asking for information to enable the drawing up of a movement programme for at least a proportion of the refugees. I hope your government is giving urgent consideration to that letter.

I enclose, for your information, a copy of a note by the Ministry of Railways which explains how the Pakistan Government are still exercising jurisdiction over some of the railway lines in parts of West Bengal.* There is here a source of friction between the two

* The total earnings of the Bengal–Assam Railway between Kancharapara and Lalgolaghat stations, including the Santipur–Navadwip branch of the Bongaon section, were being collected by East Pakistan Railways.

Dominion Governments which might have repercussions on the law and order situation in East and West Bengal. For the present, I am mentioning this matter merely for your information. We are pursuing the matter with the Pakistan Government and hope that it will be settled smoothly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

# I

# THE CITIZEN AND THE NATION

'The only real long-term policy we can have is to consolidate India by making all the minorities in the country feel completely at home in the State, and indeed by removing all sense of difference from the political point of view between the so-called majorities and minorities.'

Nehru imagined his India as one which all individuals and communities could inhabit as equals. From his very first letter, Nehru was attentive to the dangers of communal politics and an exclusionary brand of nationalism. The politics of particular identities—whether religious, caste or linguistic—stoked fear and resentment, and no society could sustain if a segment of its people felt alienated. The state's role, Nehru argued in the following excerpts, was to stand above particular interests and focus on universal socio-economic challenges. Only such an approach could create the conditions under which mutuality might exist. Nehru also wrote with concern about the poor representation and backward status of certain communities. The remedy, he felt, lay in education rather than communal or caste reservations which would only intensify the focus on identity. As these excerpts show, Nehru did speak of Muslim communalism now and again, but his overwhelming focus was on Hindu and, to a lesser extent, Sikh communal forces. Such forces had strength at the time, and majoritarian groups had a special capacity to control the national narrative. Throughout his term, Nehru kept a close watch on their activities, maintaining throughout that communalism was among the greatest threats to India.

*From a letter dated 22 November 1947*

As a government, whether central or provincial, we cannot and should not show partiality to any group or party. But as a government we are not merely a group of individuals but have certain ideals and policies. If any individual or group challenges and opposes those ideals and policies, we have to accept that challenge and meet that opposition with full strength. We propose to do so.

It is not necessary for me to write to you about the disastrous results of the evil policy followed by the Muslim League and the Pakistanis during the past few years. All of us are fully aware of this and we have seen the consequences of it. We have to continue to be vigilant, for the consequences of that evil policy have not exhausted themselves yet. There is tension and danger still and we cannot relax. Some people talk rather foolishly of war, not perhaps appreciating what this means. Such talk should not be indulged in. But we have to remember that the present situation is full of dangerous possibilities and we have to be prepared for all contingencies.

The danger to us is not so much external as internal. Reactionary forces and communal organisations are trying to disrupt the structure of free India. They do not realise that if disruption comes they will also be swept away in this process. But, of course, disruption will not come and we have to meet these reactionary forces squarely and firmly.

*From a letter dated 7 December 1947*

Reports have reached me of big demonstrations organised by the R.S.S. in some provinces. Often these demonstrations have been held in spite of prohibitory orders like Section 144. Some provincial authorities have taken no action in this matter and apparently accepted

this defiance of orders. I do not wish to interfere with your discretion in this matter. But I would like to draw your attention to the fact that this acquiescence in defiance is likely to have grave consequences.

We have a great deal of evidence to show that the R.S.S. is an organisation which is in the nature of a private army and which is definitely proceeding on the strictest Nazi lines, even following the technique of organisation. It is not our desire to interfere with civil liberties. But training in arms of large numbers of persons with the obvious intention of using them is not something that can be encouraged. The fact that the R.S.S. is definitely and deliberately against the present central and provincial governments need not be considered enough for any action to be taken against them and any legitimate propaganda might certainly be allowed. But their activity more and more goes beyond these limits and it is desirable for provincial governments to keep a watchful eye and to take such action as they may deem necessary.

Some provincial governments have taken action against periodicals for promoting hatred between communities. Probably the newspapers of the R.S.S. are more to blame in this matter than any other newspapers or periodicals outside Pakistan. It is amazing how they carry on this communal propaganda in its extremist form.

I have some knowledge of the way the Nazi movement developed in Germany. It attracted by its superficial trappings and strict discipline considerable numbers of lower middle class young men and women who are normally not too intelligent and for whom life appeared to offer little to attract them. And so they drifted towards the Nazi party because its policy and programme, such as they were, were simple, negative and did not require an active effort of the mind. The Nazi party brought Germany to ruin and I have little doubt that if these tendencies are allowed to spread and increase in India, they would do enormous injury to India. No doubt India

would survive. But she would be grievously wounded and would take a long time to recover.

*From a letter dated 5 January 1948*

We have referred the Kashmir issue to the Security Council of the United Nations . . . We have done so because we wanted to avoid, in so far as this was possible, any development which would lead to war between the two Dominions. War is never to be lightly thought of though sometimes it becomes inevitable. So while on the one hand, we have taken all necessary precautions, military and other, on the other hand, we have requested the Security Council to call upon the Pakistan Government to refrain from helping and encouraging invaders. . . .

In view of the dangerous implications of the situation on our frontiers, it is of particular importance that there should be peace and order everywhere in India and that there should in particular be no communal trouble. Any communal disturbances will weaken our front against the enemy and discredit us before the United Nations. All those, therefore, who preach communal hatred are doing a very grave disservice to the country. You will always remember that this Kashmir affair is not essentially a communal affair and that we are fighting side by side there with the Kashmir national movement under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. . . . Communal trouble in India reacts unfavourably on the Kashmir situation as well as on the all-India solution. We cannot and must not do what Pakistan does in its territory. . . .

Muslim communalism in India is too weak now to raise its head though undoubtedly there are elements of mischief still present in India. Muslim communalism functions now as a State in Pakistan. Within India the communalism we have to deal with today is

essentially Hindu and Sikh communalism which has lately become more and more aggressive and intolerant. The R.S.S. has played an important part in recent developments and evidence has been collected to implicate it in certain very horrible happenings. It is openly stated by their leaders that the R.S.S. is not a political body but there can be no doubt that their policy and programme are political, intensely communal and based on violent activities. They have to be kept in check and we must not be misled by their pious professions which are completely at variance with their policy.

The problem of rehabilitation of the vast number of refugees from Pakistan must be considered as one having the highest priority. Not only have we to prevent, as far as we can, human suffering but we have also to prevent large number of embittered people, who have lost much, from becoming homeless wanderers. Even from the point of view of the security of the State this is undesirable. Among these people there are many who could serve the State with distinction given the chance in various fields of constructive activities. We cannot lose this fund of ability. Others also have to be made into productive citizens of India and given opportunities of progress.

In regard to this question of rehabilitation two points must be clearly borne in mind. Firstly, that it is a colossal problem and requires the fullest cooperation of the whole of India in solving it. This necessitates cooperation and coordination under central direction. Secondly, in facing any big problem, it is necessary to have priorities laid down. Otherwise an attempt to do everything at the same time meets with failure all along the line. Something definitely achieved is of greater help in the next steps than a spread out effort which does not yield results. Rehabilitation on a large scale offers an excellent opportunity for economic planning. Economic issues are, of course, always before us and recently they have become very pressing. We must deal with them as a whole and lay down definite policies.

*From a letter dated 17 January 1948*

Since I last wrote to you, everything that has happened has been completely overshadowed by Gandhiji's fast. It has come on us suddenly and stunned many even of us who know him well. I am writing this letter with a prayer in my heart—which I have not ceased to make ever since I first heard of the fast—that we may be spared the supreme tragedy. It is not necessary that I should write and explain to you the significance which Gandhiji attaches to the fast; he has done it himself and it is impossible for others, however closely associated with him, to interpret his unique approach any more clearly than he can. . . .

The last prolonged fast which Gandhiji undertook was in 1943 when he was a prisoner. That fast was for a purpose which the man in the street understood and wholly sympathised with. His recent fast in Calcutta was also for an easily understood purpose which had the support of the overwhelming bulk of the people. The fast which he has now undertaken is less easy for the general public to understand; and in fact there are sections of them more particularly among the refugees, who do not sympathise with it and are in a sense antagonistic to it. Therein lies its significance and supreme courage.

We are faced, particularly in East Punjab and Delhi, with the psychological problem created by the events of the last few months. These have created in the minds of people, not merely among the refugees but also among others, a bitterness, a sense of desperation and a desire for retaliation—in short, a serious spiritual malaise. This is wholly understandable but nonetheless extremely dangerous. We have all of us done our best to cure it but have not succeeded except only to a limited extent. The difficulties have been partly due to our inability effectively to tackle the problem of rehabilitation about which I shall write further in this letter and partly to the continuing

evidence of hostility and barbaric conduct towards the minorities in Pakistan. The result has been that sections of the Hindu community are not in tune with and do not understand Gandhiji's approach to the Muslim problem in India. They resent his approach and think that it is somehow or other inimical to their own interests. And yet any person with vision can see that Gandhiji's approach is not only morally correct, but is also essentially practical. Indeed it is the only possible approach if we think in terms of the nation's good, both from the short and long distance points of view. Any other approach means perpetuating conflict and postponing all notions of national consolidation and progress.

This is not the occasion to analyse—no one can analyse them—the complex of urges which must have driven Gandhiji to take this supreme step but quite clearly its main purpose is to make the majority community in India search its heart and purge itself of hatred and the desire to retaliate. In the atmosphere in which it has been undertaken, it displays a degree of heroism of which only Gandhiji is capable. The ordeal has been made worse for him by the tragic events that have occurred in Pakistan in the last few days—the murder and wholesale looting in Karachi and the revolting attack on a non-Muslim refugee train in Gujrat in West Punjab. But these incidents, in Gandhiji's conception, are not merely wholly irrelevant but only increase the urgency of the step that he has taken.

I am sure you will mobilise all your resources to emphasise to the people of your province, by every possible means, the meaning and purpose of the fast and thus help to create a situation in which Gandhiji may break it. I regard the emergency created by the fast as at least as grave as the disease that has given rise to it; and if we do not go all out to meet it, history will not forgive us. . . .

We have in the last few days begun to devote increasing attention to the problem of rehabilitation. Amidst the preoccupations caused

by the task of evacuating several million people, I am afraid we did not devote to the subject all the attention that it deserved. Any further delay in tackling it is likely to lead to disastrous consequences. In Delhi city alone the vast number of refugees, numbering about 4,50,000 has become a tremendous problem and lately there have been disturbances. In East Punjab, while the provincial government has achieved a considerable measure of success in some respects, a very great deal still remains to be done. It is doubtful if the resources of East Punjab Government are sufficient for the purpose of tackling this problem; and it is necessary that every province in India should also cooperate. Essentially, therefore, it is a matter for central direction and central planning. We must devise a machinery which could tackle the problem rapidly, effectively, and on a planned basis. Vision is necessary and there must be a note of urgency about the work.

*From a letter dated 20 February 1948*

We have completed six months of our existence as an independent nation. What a period it has been of crisis following on crisis and all the trials and tribulations we went through during that period culminating in the supreme disaster of the assassination of Gandhiji! . . .

Remarkable changes in our political structure have taken place in the six months that have gone. The Hindu Mahasabha, as a political organisation, has liquidated itself. The R.S.S. has been banned and the reaction to this throughout the country has been good. The U.P. Parliamentary Muslim League has also liquidated itself and I think we may look forward to the gradual disintegration of the Muslim League in India as a political organisation without any external pressure from government. These events have, of course, been precipitated by the assassination of Gandhiji, but they indicate a wholly healthy development in our political life. They are necessary steps to the

creation of what we have been ceaselessly trying to achieve, viz., a democratic secular State in India.

If one looks at the developments both in India and in Pakistan during the last six months, one can see them as manifestations of a clash between the forces of communal reaction and progress in the two Dominions. I think we can say that in India the forces of progress are winning. These forces were subject to terrific strain during the time of the disturbances but thanks to the remarkable genius of Gandhiji and the courage and idealism with which he sustained us, reaction never succeeded in getting the upper hand. If only we are not complacent and do not relax, I am sure we can achieve the objective which Gandhiji set before us. In Pakistan, on the other hand, all indications at the moment are that the forces of reaction are winning. Mr. Jinnah has been talking more and more of an Islamic State based on the laws of the *Shariat*; and narrow provincial jealousies seem to have become so aggravated in Pakistan that he has had to issue a stern warning. How long it will take for the forces of progress in Pakistan to reach a stage when they can dominate the government, it is impossible to forecast, but it looks as if it will be some considerable time. But whatever happens in Pakistan, quite clearly our task in India is clear; we must pursue with even greater determination than in the past our efforts at forming a secular State in which men of all communities can walk with their heads high.

*From a letter dated 16 August 1948*

Whatever the decisions in regard to Kashmir and Hyderabad may be, provincial governments should keep wide awake about the possible reactions within their areas. As I have mentioned above, there appears to have been recrudescence of communal activity in various parts of India. This has to be checked and prevented from doing any

mischief, whether it is Hindu or Muslim or Sikh. Unfortunately, some leaders of the Sikhs have been carrying on a most unwise policy and delivering intemperate speeches. You will have noticed that the Hindu Mahasabha intends to embark again into politics. This is an undesirable move and has to be watched carefully. As you know, Government have decided not to encourage any communal organisation. That is to say that government or government officers, whether in the Centre or in the provinces, should have no dealings with the Hindu Mahasabha as such or any other body that is obviously communal, whatever different garb it may wear.

In a letter sent to me by a Premier of a province, it has been suggested that Army units should be raised provincially and given provincial names. This is proposed because it is thought that it would lead to greater enthusiasm in the province concerned. The Defence Ministry are entirely opposed to this proposal and have pointed out that it would disturb the present organisation of the Army. I entirely agree with them. We have enough provincialism as it is, and we should not encourage it any more, specially in the Army. The Army should be a homogeneous Indian Army and not a collection of provincial armies. It is highly important that any separatist tendencies, whether communal or provincial, should not be allowed to come into the Army. Present recruitment is done on a zonal rather than a provincial basis. It would be a great pity if we changed this and prevented people in the Army from developing an all-India outlook.

*From a letter dated 6 December 1948*

We have received numerous warnings about the activities of the R.S.S. and their intention to start satyagraha in the near future, possibly at the time of the Congress session in Jaipur when many

of our Ministers and others will be away from their headquarters. For the R.S.S. to talk of satyagraha is rather a contradiction in terms, because the R.S.S. is about as far removed from the spirit of satyagraha as any organisation can be. The R.S.S. has been essentially a secret organisation with a public facade, having no rules of membership, no registers, no accounts, although large sums are collected. They do not believe in peaceful methods or in satyagraha. What they say in public is entirely opposed to what they do in private. Every provincial government has had plenty of experience of their activities. One does not mind or, at any rate, one accepts an opponent. But it is distressing that any organisation consisting of large numbers of young men, should be so utterly little minded and lacking in not only vision but in commonsense or common understanding. The R.S.S. is typical in this respect of the type of organisation that grew up in various parts of Europe in support of fascism. . . .

There has been a good deal of wild talk amongst some Sikh leaders in East Punjab and elsewhere about Sikh rights. Claims are made which go completely counter to our declared policy and which are based entirely on an acceptance of communalism.* We have said little on this subject because we wish to avoid needless public controversy, and because Government's position has been quite clear. I should like to repeat here that on no account and whatever the consequences, are we going to accept communalism in this shape in our Constitution or elsewhere. It is a matter of deep regret to me that some Sikh leaders have become so completely irresponsible as to talk in the language

* The references are to statements by Master Tara Singh, the Akali Dal leader, criticizing the Congress decision not to recognize religious minorities, and to demands in the Constituent Assembly for reservations for Sikhs in legislative and executive posts and in public services.

of threat. The Sikh community is a brave and gallant one forming an integral part of this India of ours. In the past, they have been grievously misled and they have suffered greatly because of this. This business of misleading them still continues, and I fear that if it is not checked, there will be trouble for them and for us. But on this question of principle in regard to introducing communalism in our constitutional structure there is going to be no compromise and no giving in on our part. That is exactly what led to Pakistan and all the trouble that followed. It is a strange irony of fate that there should be any person in India, who now puts forward a claim that the old Muslim League used to put forward.

The language question has been the subject of great argument. I do not wish to deal with it in its larger aspects, but one aspect I should like to stress. It should be the fundamental policy of the State to encourage primary education in the mother tongue of the child whatever it may be, provided of course there are sufficient children to take advantage of this. This has little to do with what the State language or what the provincial languages are. For instance, if there are a considerable number of Tamil children in Calcutta or Bombay, they have a right to be given primary education in Tamil by the State. At a slightly later stage, the official provincial or State language must, of course, be taught to them. But it would be wrong and against generally accepted principles that they should be forced to go through their primary education in a language which is alien for them. This may involve, in great cities, the State running its primary schools in a variety of languages. This can only be done with recognised Indian languages and when there are sufficient number of children who demand it. I think if this principle was understood, some of our linguistic conflicts would cease. We may not be able to give effect to this principle straight off. Nevertheless, it must be accepted as the only right method.

*From a letter dated 16 April 1949*

The question has arisen about communal proportions in the services. This is one of the unfortunate legacies of a past age. Perhaps we cannot suddenly do away with them. But I think we should always bear in mind that all this business of communalism has to go and we should therefore endeavour to lessen the existing evil, wherever we can. The right approach is not a communal approach but an approach to help backward classes to come up to the level of others.

*From a letter dated 4 January 1950*

You are going to have elections for the new Parliament very soon. I am writing to you about the necessity of having an adequate number of women members elected. Even in the Constituent Assembly the women members were very few. Of these some dropped out for various reasons and their places were filled by men. I think it is important that we should keep up and add to the number of women in Parliament. From every point of view this is desirable. I have no doubt that a sufficient number of women, at least as competent and suitable as men, are available.

In this matter perhaps an exception might be made to the general rule we have suggested regarding members of Provincial Assemblies who have been in the Constituent Assembly. That is to say, in regard to such women members, if it is considered desirable, they may be permitted to resign from Provincial Assemblies in order to stand for Parliament. There are very few such cases.

*From a letter dated 16 February 1950*

The outstanding event in India, during the last fortnight, has been the recrudescence of communal warfare on a fairly large scale in

East Bengal and Calcutta. You will remember my referring, in my last letter, to certain developments in Eastern Pakistan. This led to a large number of persons, mostly belonging to the depressed classes, migrating to India. The stories of atrocities in Khulna district and the plight of the refugees excited people in Calcutta and there was some trouble there in certain Muslim localities. Fairly large-scale arson and looting took place there and a number of people were killed. News of this made matters in Eastern Pakistan, which were bad enough already, much worse. In Dacca especially and elsewhere, there was considerable killing of Hindus and arson and looting. I shall not give you any details here, partly because they have been appearing in the press and partly because correct facts are not known yet. But it is clear that what happened in Eastern Bengal was on a bigger scale than we had hitherto since August 1947. What happened in Calcutta also was on a considerable scale, though, from such accounts as we have received, the persons killed were not many. The situation is still far from normal either in Eastern Pakistan or in Calcutta and there is always an apprehension of further trouble. About Eastern Pakistan, I cannot say much at this stage, as the news received is meagre. About Calcutta, I can say that while petty incidents continue to occur, the general situation is well in hand. I think that the Chief Minister and his Government in West Bengal have handled the situation with vigour and speed. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad went to Calcutta today. The main difficulty in Calcutta at present is the large number of Muslims who have left their houses and have congregated in other places for safety. Some of these *mohallas* have been burnt down. It is hoped, however, that most of these Muslims will return to their old houses.

What has occurred in East Bengal with its repercussions in Calcutta is serious enough. The only very partial consolation is that it might have been worse in the sense that it might have been more widespread and continuous. Of course, it is difficult to be certain

yet as to what further consequences might occur, as the situation is still very abnormal. We appear to live somewhere near the top of a volcano and any spark tends to waken it into eruption. We succeed more or less in bottling it up again. But the volcano remains and we hear the rumblings of it. It is natural for our people to be excited at the news of terrible happenings in East Bengal, and then when retaliation takes place at this end, stories of it excite and inflame people on the other side. There is this action and reaction repeatedly and a vicious circle is created. How are we to get out of it?

We got caught in the circle of hatred and violence many years ago, when the old Muslim League started preaching Pakistan and the two-nation theory. That led to partition and the horrible consequences that followed. We had hoped that partition, painful and injurious as it was, would bring us out of that vicious circle. But then those terrible happenings took place in Pakistan and north India in August and September 1947. We had paid a very heavy price. I have no doubt that it was the presence of Gandhiji at that critical hour that saved the situation not only in Calcutta and Bengal, but also, a little later, in northern India. But the wound was too deep and the healing process could not even begin, because of continuous irritation. We seem to go on paying the price and it is not quite clear when and how this business will end.

Some people, chiefly in the Hindu and Sikh communal organizations, talk about forcibly uniting the country again. Other people criticize the Government for what they call its weak policy towards Pakistan. It is not quite clear what policy, other than what we have been pursuing, they would like to be followed, unless it is war. If war is thrust upon us, as a self-respecting and proud nation we shall face it with all our strength, and because there is a possibility of it, so long as these troubles and tension continue, we have to be vigilant and prepared. But most people do not realize what modern war

means. It is a terrible affair and almost an unending thing, bringing ruin to all parties concerned. It may mean foreign intervention and in any event, it means saying goodbye, for a long period, to any real progress of the country. From a purely military point of view, I am not afraid of a war. But looking at the whole picture, I am convinced that it is our bounden duty to avoid war as far as possible. We have therefore pursued a policy of firmness and, at the same time, of avoidance of war. . . .

There is another aspect to this question. If we have war or something approaching war, whatever the other consequences might be, it is clear that we shall not be able to help or rescue those vast numbers of people in East Bengal, who look to us for help. They will be completely bottled up in a violently hostile area and there will be no one to protect them. It has always to be remembered that every act of retaliation in one country or the other leads to a worsening of the situation and to greater danger to minority elements from the majority because passions are aroused. We get caught ever deeper in that vicious circle without being able to succour those who look to us for help. The only way to get out of that circle is not to do anything which is wrong both in principle and in its practical effects and which worsens the situation on the other side. Above all, it is essential that when such critical situations face us, we should remain calm and not allow ourselves to be rushed by the passion of the moment which does no good to anybody, least of all to ourselves.

*From a letter dated 1 March 1950*

If India is to progress, we must absorb, and make our own the various minorities in India, and notably the Muslims. The view of the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organizations is opposed to this. I am certain that the Hindu Mahasabha policy is fatal for India. Their

talk of putting an end to partition is foolish in the extreme. We cannot do so, and we should not try to do so. If by any chance partition was ended, while present passions last on either side, it would mean tremendous new problems for us to face. We would be worse off than ever. Therefore, there must be no thought of putting an end to partition and having what is called *Akhand Bharat*.

There is a tendency among some of us to demand loyalty from the Muslims in India and to condemn tendencies amongst them which may be pro-Pakistani. Such tendencies, of course, are wrong and have to be condemned. But I think it is wrong to lay stress always on the loyalty on behalf of the Muslims of India. Loyalty is not produced to order or by fear. It comes as a natural growth from circumstances which make loyalty not only a sentiment which appeals to one but also profitable in the long run. We have to produce conditions which lead to this sentiment being produced. In any event, criticism and cavilling at minorities does not help.

It is difficult to think of long-term policies when the situation is an ever-changing one. The only real long-term policy we can have is to consolidate India by making all the minorities in the country feel completely at home in the State, and indeed by removing all sense of difference from the political point of view between the so-called majorities and minorities. That will, no doubt, take some time. But that is the only goal to aim at and every step taken must keep that in view. An immediate short-term policy must lay stress on Governments on either side guaranteeing, in so far as they can, security for minorities. This means, in the present context, giving compensation to sufferers and rehabilitating those who have been driven out of their houses during the recent disturbances. If they have migrated, they should be invited to go back to their homes. Where homes have been destroyed, Governments must help in providing new homes. It is essential also that the guilty should be punished

and should be made to feel that it does not pay to create disturbance and to loot and kill. Abducted women must be our particular care and should be recovered. Forced conversions cannot be recognized. It may be that the Pakistan Government does not give full effect to this policy even though it might agree to it. What we should do in the circumstances will have to be considered step by step. . . .

Looking further into this matter, it seems that if minorities are to remain and function where they are, they must be represented in Governments and elsewhere. It is wrong in every way for a large section of the population to feel that it has no voice in Government or in the Services. It was certainly a mistake in the Punjab to separate the Services communally after partition.

*From a letter dated 19 March 1950*

It might be said that there has been no major incident in East or West Bengal during the last three weeks or so. Of course, we cannot be sure of what might have happened or is happening in some remote village in East Bengal. I can only report from such information as we get from various sources. But I think that it would be true to say that no major incident has happened in either of the Bengals. . . .

Travelling conditions between East and West Bengal have become relatively easier, though they are still restricted and full of difficulties. This has resulted in a continuous stream of Hindu refugees from East Bengal into West Bengal. A considerable number of Muslims have also left Calcutta for East Bengal and some have gone to the U.P. and Bihar. This inflow and outflow continue and are likely to continue unless something else happens. It may be said that hardly a Hindu in East Bengal at present feels any sense of security and he is desirous of coming away. When we remember that the Hindus in East Bengal still number over 12 millions, the extent of the problem

may be realized. It seems to me clear that it is impossible for us to go on receiving month after month, year after year, this enormous population, uprooted from their homes. On the other hand, it is equally clear that we cannot refuse entry to a person who looks to us for succour in his or her distress. If these great migrations continue, they will upset the whole social fabric of India, apart from putting an intolerable burden on us.

The only right way to solve this is to create conditions which give full security to the minorities to live in their homes wherever they might be. Assurances about this have frequently been given at Inter-Dominion Conferences and the like, and indeed the partition of India presumed such an assurance. Nevertheless, the Hindu minority has been progressively squeezed out of Pakistan. How then are we to meet this problem—not only the immediate problem of giving security but the more basic problem out of which this immediate problem has arisen? I think we are justified in thinking that this basic problem has arisen from that communal and narrow outlook which has led to the conception of an Islamic State in Pakistan. If that conception continues, it consequences also continue.

I am merely mentioning to you some of the important aspects of this very great problem. I shall not venture to suggest what we should do in the present to meet it, because any decision that we might take is a difficult one and we are giving it the fullest consideration. You must know that some of the remedies suggested are far-reaching and dangerous. Yet the mere fact that they have been suggested shows the deep-seated nature of the disease. Meanwhile, we have made some arrangements for the looking-after of the refugees that are coming from East Bengal. We have also strengthened our defences on the Bengal border.

Thinking of this Bengal problem, as well as all that has gone before it and might possibly follow after it, I am filled with deep distress and

a sense of failure. All the ideals we have stood for in the past seem gradually to fade away and new urges and emotions fill the people. Circumstances drive us onward from one position to another, each further away from what we used to consider our anchor. We cannot run away from the task that history has set for us. But a cruel destiny seems to pursue us and nullify all our efforts.

*From a letter dated 1 April 1950*

What does [the large movement of Hindus and Muslims] show? Quite apart from the murder and arson and abductions, and forcible conversions and lootings, that have taken place in East Pakistan, and the murder and arson and looting that have taken place in West Bengal and some other parts of India, the major fact stands out that the Hindus of East Pakistan feel that it is not possible for them to stay there. They have no sense of security, much less of living their normal lives with opportunity to go ahead. The other major fact is that Muslims in West Bengal and, to some extent, in the northern and north-western parts of U.P. have also lost all sense of security. Pakistan, because of its basic policy, must be held to blame for much that has happened. But are we free from blame and can we excuse everything on the plea of inevitable reactions and repercussions? I cannot accept that argument. We have failed to preserve law and order and we have failed to give protection and a sense of security to large numbers of our Muslim nationals. Our failure may be explained, but, nonetheless, it is a failure which brings no credit to us.

We are passing through a major revolution in the minds of the people in India. That revolution started at the time of the partition or earlier and it has continued in various degrees. Now it has reached a new climax. The first thing for us to be clear about is our objective.

Are we holding to our old objectives or do we wish to change them? Whatever we do, it should be done deliberately and after thought and not spasmodically and under stress of emotion. For my part, I hold to our old ideals and our old objectives. I hold to them because I think they are right as well as because I believe that any other line of action will bring ruin to our people. I am convinced that in the last analysis, it is the Gandhian approach to the communal problem that can solve it. That approach may be varied according to circumstances, but its basic principles have to be adhered to.

But there is little or none of this approach visible today. A great deal of excited criticism has been thrown at me, chiefly from the press in India or part of it. That criticism has led me to an even stronger belief that we must hold fast to our anchor. If that anchor drifts away, then I have no particular objective to work or live for. Therefore, I propose to hold to that anchor, whatever my critics may feel or say. I can function in no other way. . . .

I write to you about the Bengal problem and its repercussions elsewhere. In considering it, however, we cannot forget the wider world context today. We appear to live in a disintegrating world and there is no near prospect of the forces of peace overcoming the tendencies of war. We have stood out as champions of peace in the world, and now, today, we feel humiliated. How can we champion peace and freedom elsewhere, if we cannot maintain them in our own country? How can we condemn communalism elsewhere, if we tolerate it in India?

*From a letter dated 2 July 1950*

One matter to which I attach great importance is the evacuation of mosques, temples and *gurdwaras* by refugees and others, who may have taken possession of them either in India or in Pakistan,

and the handing over of these buildings to people of that religion who can look after them properly. A good deal was done in Delhi in regard to mosques here, but I believe many mosques still remain in the possession of Hindus or Sikhs in the Punjab or elsewhere. So also many temples and *gurdwaras* remain in the possession of Muslims in Pakistan, West and East. I think we should concentrate on all these religious edifices and free them from this kind of forcible occupation. This has both a practical importance and a great sentimental significance.

The problem of minorities in Pakistan or in India has many aspects. But the most important one is the psychological aspect. In each country, conditions have to be created to produce a sense of absolute security in the minds of the minority. Government can do much. Officials can do a great deal and the public at large, of course, can make or mar any programme. But above everything, we must try to increase the morale of the minorities. Unless they have that morale, even external protection will do little good. In East Bengal, for some time past and today, the most unfortunate feature is the utter demoralization of the Hindus. It should be our first task therefore to attack this sense of helplessness and fear and try to make the minorities everywhere more self-reliant. The press can do a great deal in this respect. Reciting long tales of woe, even though they are true, and always pointing out the helplessness of the people concerned, has the effect of demoralizing still further. A different psychological approach is necessary. It is no good at all for the Muslims in Pakistan to preach homilies to the Hindus; it is equally no good for the Hindus in India to preach homilies to the Muslims. It is by the behaviour of the majority community and not by its sermons that it will be judged, and ultimately, the test is the reaction to that behaviour in the minority community. The whole future of our country as of Pakistan depends upon this growth of

morale. Masses of frightened and demoralized refugees can do little good to themselves or to the country they go. . . .

I have drawn your attention to the desirability of relaxing and liberalizing the working of the permit system between India and West Pakistan. Also to a very liberal interpretation of the evacuee property laws. Instances continue to come before me of harsh and unfair treatment of individuals. I hope that it may be possible to do away with this abnormal legislation regarding evacuee properties. Meanwhile, we should tone it down and liberalize it in working.

*From a letter dated 1 August 1951*

Whatever harm communalism may do in India, and it can do great harm because it is a disruptive and degrading force, the harm it does to India in other countries is tremendous. Immediately the high edifice that we have built up in their eyes begins to crack up and totter and we appear to them as narrow-minded bigots following social customs which nobody in the world understands or appreciates. We talk of high philosophies and our ancient greatness but act in narrow grooves and show intolerance to our neighbour. These are basic questions for us to keep in mind, for our future depends on the answer that we give to them. . . .

Communal organizations, old and new, are functioning with some vigour nowadays, probably because of the coming elections. They appear to have ample funds. There are enough reactionary and anti-social elements to provide them with these funds and they can always exploit the name of religion and ancient culture. Essentially their appeal is more dangerous for India's future, because it is insidious, than many other appeals, coming from obviously dangerous quarters. Whenever the tension with Pakistan increases, these communal organizations take advantage of this to preach their

misguided views. As the Muslims League did before the partition, they preach the gospel of hatred and separatism. They go about saying continually that Muslims are not to be trusted and thus creating popular feelings against them. There may be Muslims who cannot be trusted. But I am quite sure that in the case of a conflict with Pakistan, the dangerous element will be the communal Hindu element which will then try to act up to its declared policies against the minorities. Therefore, we have to be particularly careful of the activities of the communal organizations at such a critical juncture.

*From a letter dated 1 November 1951*

I still think, as I have said on many occasions, that the most dangerous development today is that of communalism and separatism. Some people have criticized me because of this and declared that there is no such thing as communalism in India. That is a thing of the past. Most of these critics happen to function in communal organizations today and themselves play an exceedingly narrow-minded and communal role. It is understandable that they do not find any fault with themselves and their own activities. They could only see the communalism of some other group, and not their own.

The fact is that the partition and its consequences, while it largely pushed out Muslim communalism and sent it to Pakistan, where it flourished exceedingly, also resulted in encouraging Hindu and Sikh communalism in India and many other separatist tendencies. These flourished in the name of nationalism and culture. They demanded loudly what they called strong action against Pakistan, which included war, and criticized governmental policy as one of appeasement of Pakistan. These people, most of whom had done little in the struggle for India's freedom, become her aggressive champions—their India being limited of course to those who agreed with them.

This narrow-minded upsurge spread the spirit of separatism in various forms throughout the country and imperilled the national unity which it had been the aim of the Congress to build up and which it had largely succeeded in doing. The Sikhs demanded a separate State or at least a separate province. Demands for linguistic provinces became more vociferous, regardless of certain basic facts and agreements. Caste groups began to think more of themselves than of any larger national issue. Even the Congress was affected by these tendencies and many in the Congress succumbed to them.

We are told that communalism and separatism have no significance and that the real problem of India is that of poverty and unemployment and the like. Of course, the primary problem of India is economic and everything else has second place. But in order to tackle that problem effectively, there must be some unity of conception and effort. If separatist and sectarian ideas increase, they make it difficult to tackle that principal problem. If chaotic conditions exist in some parts of the country, then the energy of the nation is largely absorbed in dealing with them, and other matters, however important, become secondary. Therefore, it is of primary importance to scotch and try to put an end to these communal and separatist tendencies in order to go ahead with the primary problem of India's economic ills. The two are interrelated and affect one another and, to some extent, have to be tackled together. But if we allow the communal spirit to grow, then inevitably social reaction will also grow and prevent economic progress.

I can understand these criticisms from non-Congressmen, who have had some communal background in the past. But it amazes me that any Congressman should so mislead himself and others as to think that we can ignore these dangerous tendencies. Because we partly ignored them, they grew and cast a shadow all over the

country and created an inner weakness in the Congress itself. A change has come now because of a straightforward and frontal approach to this problem and most people who had allowed themselves to drift in a wrong direction have pulled themselves up. There should be or can be no relaxation in this effort. I would like to repeat that it is better to lose elections than to give up something which has been the basis of our national movement and that is the foundation of all progress in India.

*From a letter dated 17 October 1952*

I have sometimes received complaints from Christian missions and missionaries, both foreign and Indian, about the differential treatment accorded to them in some States. It is said that there is some kind of harassment also occasionally. Some instances of this kind have come to my notice. I hope that your Government will take particular care that there is no such discrimination, much less harassment. I know that there is a hangover still of the old prejudice against Christian missions and missionaries. In the old days, many of them, except in the far South, where they were indigenous, represented the foreign power and sometimes even acted more or less as its agents. I know also that some of them in the north-east encouraged separatist and disruptive movements. That phase is over. If any person, foreign or Indian, behaves in that way still, certainly we should take suitable action. But we must remember that Christianity is a religion of large numbers of people in India and that it came to the South of India nearly 2000 years ago. It is as much part of the Indian scene as any other religion. Our policy of religious neutrality and protection of minorities must not be affected or sullied by discriminatory treatment or harassment. While Christian missionaries have sometimes behaved objectionably from

the political point of view, they have undoubtedly done great service to India in the social fields and they continue to give that service. In the tribal areas, many of them have often devoted their lives to the tribes there. I wish that there were Indians who were willing to serve the tribal folk in this way. I know that there are some Indians now who are doing this but I would like more of them to do so. It must be remembered that the Christian community, by and large, is poor and is sometimes economically on the level of the backward or depressed classes.

We permit, by our Constitution, not only freedom of conscience and belief but even proselytism. Personally I do not like proselytism and it is rather opposed to the old Indian outlook which is, in this matter, one of live and let live. But I do not wish to come in other people's ways provided they are not objectionable in any other sense. In particular, I would welcome any form of real social service by any one, missionary or not. A question arises, however, how far we should encourage foreigners to come here for purely evangelical work. Often these foreign missionaries raise funds in foreign countries on the plea of converting the savage heathen. I do not want anyone to come here who looks upon me as a savage heathen, not that I mind being called a heathen or a pagan by anybody. But I do not want any foreigners to come who look down upon us or who speak about us in their own countries in terms of contempt. But if any foreigner wants to come here for social service, I would welcome him.

*From a letter dated 30 October 1952*

We have looked upon the question of the tribes as a social problem, which of course it is. But in these North-Eastern Frontier Areas, it is very much a political problem also because of the frontier and because these people are culturally related to the people on the other

side of the frontier, e.g., the Tibetans or Burmese. The whole area, as all real frontier areas are, is full of these mixed racial types with a Mongolian element present in greater or less degree. The languages they speak are numerous. They have no written script and it was the missionaries who taught them the Latin script and wrote grammars and dictionaries for them.

Another fact to be remembered is that all these tribes and other people in these areas were almost completely cut off from the rest of India during British rule. Few of them came out of their areas and few from outside went there. The British did not like this journeying to and fro. Thus they never experienced a sensation of being in a country called India and they were hardly influenced by the struggle for freedom or other movements in India. Their chief experience of outsiders was that of British officers and Christian missionaries who generally tried to make them anti-Indian. As Indian independence gradually approached and it became obvious that British rule was coming to an end in India, some of these British officers and Christian missionaries induced them to think in terms of independence. This had some effect on some sections of the Nagas.

Generally speaking, these tribal people have marked customs and ways of living, which are different from those of the Assamese and thus they have not mixed and do not even now mix easily on the social plane. There is a feeling of separateness in these tribes and some apprehension that they might be merged in the sea of Indian humanity, that they might have to give up their customs and ways of living, that they might even have their land taken away from them.

There is a tendency in Assam for what is called integration of these tribes and for the establishment of a homogeneous State. This really means merging in a cultural and like sense the tribal people into the Assamese. I think that this is not a desirable movement and instead of achieving its objective, will lead to conflicts and difficulties.

There is bound to be a process of assimilation, but this will have to be developed by itself through education and contacts without any special effort. Indeed, the effort should be on retaining their individual culture, much of which is certainly worth retaining. They have an innate sense of art and are a strong and virile people. It would be a great pity if in this respect they were brought down to a lower level, though they might advance in some other ways.

The first problem we have to face there is to inspire them with confidence and to make them feel at one with India, and to realize that they are part of India and have an honoured place in it. This can only be done by allowing them to retain their own cultural traits and habits and leaving them to develop along their own lines without any compulsion from outside. . . .

Thus the problem of these areas is to make the people feel that they have perfect freedom to live their own lives and to develop according to their wishes and genius. India to them should signify not only a protecting force but a liberating one. Any conception that India is ruling them and that they are the ruled, or that the customs and habits with which they are unfamiliar are going to be imposed upon them, will alienate them and make our frontier problems more difficult.

*From a letter dated 2 July 1953*

My visit abroad has helped me, as it always does, to look at things in broader perspective. From there, even more than from India, I realized how utterly wrong and injurious was the Praja Parishad-Jan Sangh agitation about Jammu and Kashmir. No one abroad understood it. It seemed to them an indication of a narrowness and exceedingly limited outlook, the type of outlook that has brought Pakistan near disaster. No one abroad attached the slightest importance to

this agitation, except in so far as it showed some weaknesses in our body politic. Another thing that was evident from abroad was the danger of provincialism. This again is evidence of narrowness in outlook, of forgetting big things for small, and an immaturity of political thinking. That does not mean that there should not be a reorganization of our States, but it does mean that the background of this agitation proceeds from a limited and narrow outlook, injurious to the best interests of India. It surprises me that men of ability should get swept away by this disintegrating tendency.

So far as we are concerned, we have declared quite clearly that after the Andhra State is well established, we shall appoint a high-powered Commission to consider the question of reorganization of States in all its many aspects. We do not propose to consider the question of one State separately now. Indeed this cannot be so considered because in every such instance many States are concerned. Nor do we propose to consider this matter on the purely linguistic plane, although language and culture are necessarily important. So also are other considerations. In spite of my clear declaration about such a Commission, I find that agitations continue in some parts of the country and sometimes people indulge in what are called hunger strikes. If this country and its policies are going to be controlled or influenced in this manner, then indeed we may say goodbye to any kind of progress or unity. So far as I am concerned, I do not propose to have our Government's policy influenced in the slightest by these methods. Nor do I propose to take up the case of any single linguistic State. I am surprised that suddenly some people should have galvanized themselves into activity in regard to Hyderabad state and demanded its disintegration. Why they have chosen this particular moment to do this is not clear to me, unless it bears some relation to the formation of the Andhra State. I am sorry for this because it denotes an outlook with which I have no sympathy whatever and

which, I am sure, if given free play, would bring utter chaos in a great part of India and lead to other disastrous consequences also. It is a matter of deep regret to me that Congressmen and even Congress committees have fallen into this trap. . . .

The final ascent of Everest has been a great achievement in which all of us should take pride. Here again there has been pettiness and the narrowest type of nationalism shown by some people. Controversies have arisen as to whether Tenzing got there first or Hillary and whether Tenzing is an Indian national or a Nepalese national. I was amazed to learn of these disputes and the excitement shown over them. It does not make the slightest difference to anybody whether Tenzing first reached the top or Hillary. Neither could have done so without the help of the other. Indeed, both of them could not have done so without the help of the whole party, and if I may take this idea a little further, the whole party could not have done so without the accumulated experience, labour and sacrifice of all their predecessors who tried to reach the top of Everest. Great human achievements are always the result of combined endeavours in which numerous people take part. It may be that one person takes the last step, but the other persons also count and should not be forgotten. For us to show a narrow and deplorable nationalism in such matters is not to add to the credit of our country but to lead people to think that we are petty in outlook and suffering from some kind of inferiority complex. . . .

I venture to write to you this because I have been watching, with restrained pride and pleasure as well as ever growing sense of responsibility and humility, the growth of India's prestige in the world. It is not for us to talk about this and I have deliberately not attempted to praise India or to say much about any success that she may have achieved in her policy. That praise will remain locked up in my mind and heart and will give me strength for greater effort in the cause of the country we hold dear. Why should we talk of this

to others? It is for others to do so, if they so choose. Facts are more important than praise or blame, and facts are compelling the world to give a new status and position to India in the larger scheme of things. But this, though pleasing, is also a little terrifying, for it brings tremendous responsibilities in its train. Are we, with all our petty controversies about linguistic provinces and communal agitations and casteism and Tenzing and Hillary quite big enough to shoulder these responsibilities which are coming to us so swiftly and extensively? It is well that we think of this in all humility of spirit.

*From a letter dated 20 September 1953*

I want to share with you a certain apprehension that is growing within me. I feel that in many ways the position relating to minority groups in India is deteriorating. Our Constitution is good and we do not make any distinction in our rules and regulations or laws. But, in effect, changes creep in because of administrative practices or officers. Often these changes are not deliberate, sometimes, they are so.

In the Services, generally speaking, the representation of the minority communities is lessening. In some cases, it is very poor indeed. It is true that some of the highest offices in the land are occupied by members of these minority communities. They occupy high places also in our foreign missions. But in looking through Central Government figures, as well as some others, I am distressed to find that the position is very disadvantageous to them, chiefly to the Muslims and sometimes others also.

In our Defence Services, there are hardly any Muslims left. In the vast Central Secretariat of Delhi, there are very few Muslims. Probably the position is somewhat better in the provinces, but not much more so. What concerns me most is that there is no effort being made to improve this situation, which is likely to grow worse unless checked.

It is all very well for us to say that we shall not pay any attention to communal and like considerations in appointments. I am no lover of communalism and its works. Indeed, I think it is the most dangerous tendency in India and has to be combated on all fronts. But, at the same time, we have to realize that in a vast and mixed country like India we must produce a sense of balance and of assurance of a square deal and future prospects in all parts of the country and in all communities of India. If the tendency is to upset any balance or to emphasize one aspect at the cost of another, the result is a lack of equilibrium and dissatisfaction and frustration among large groups.

This is exactly what is happening and it is not a good thing. I think we should make a very special effort to check this wrong tendency in so far as the Services are concerned. The question is a wider one than the Services, although the Services are an important part in the texture of India. We have to create a sense of partnership in every group and individual in the country, a sense of being a full sharer in the benefits and opportunities that are offered. It is only then that we produce the right attitude of mind. Nothing seems to me so unbecoming as to preach loyalty to others, meaning by that word 'loyalty' that everyone should fall in step with us. This is very much like the approach of the Communists in some parts of the world and of the Americans in other parts of the world, each of whom demand uniformity and submission to their way of thinking and life. That brings conflict in the international sphere, and a like approach in the national sphere must inevitably lead to conflict also, apart from being intrinsically wrong.

I have referred to Muslims above, but this applies to Christians and others also. Unfortunately there is a feeling of apprehension among a large number of our Christian countrymen and countrywomen, and many of them feel uncertain of their place in India in the future. We have always to remember India as a composite country, composite

in many ways, in religion, in customs, in languages, in ways of life, etc. An attempt by the majority groups to impose itself on others can only lead to inner conflicts, which are as bad as outer conflicts. The basic problem for us today in India is to build up a united India in the real and inner sense of the word, that is, a psychological integration of our people.

I find the language approach is often not very happy, though I think there has been an improvement in it lately. We want Hindi as the national language and I think it is quite essential that this should be so. We have to work for it. But the method of working for it is of the highest importance. If that method is not the right one, then we get further away from our objective. The appeal of language is a very intimate and far-reaching one and has to be dealt with with the greatest care. Anyone who has studied the history of Europe will find that language conflicts have created more difficulties than almost anything else. He will find that every attempt at the suppression of a language has had the opposite effect. With this experience behind them, Europeans now tend to accept even a variety of languages in order to avoid any appearance of suppression or conflict. Small countries recognize officially several languages and sometimes even more than one script.

The right approach should always be a positive approach of encouraging a language such as Hindi, never of discouraging any other or discriminating against any other. The whole question of linguistic provinces would lose part at least of the passion that accompanies it, if we are absolutely fair to every language and give it freedom of growth.

The question of Urdu, and the way it is being treated in many parts of India, has distressed me greatly. This is not only for cultural reasons but even more so for basic political reasons. I could enter into the merits of this question and I think these merits are very

substantial. But in such matters it is not merely merit that counts but a psychology that is created and the mental reaction that is produced among large numbers of people. There is no doubt at all that there are large numbers of people who speak and write Urdu. In the Punjab, in Delhi, and in the northern U.P., a very considerable number do so. In many other parts of India there are large groups, especially in the big cities. In fact, there are such groups all over India and sometimes the numbers are fairly large. I was surprised to find the number of people speaking and writing Urdu in the South, especially in the border regions of Hyderabad and Andhra. When I go there, my language is easily understood by most of people.

That fact alone is important as showing that Urdu has a certain vitality in India, and creating an impression that we are against it must hurt those large numbers of people and make them feel that we are against something that they cherish. The test of this, as of other matters, is not what we feel about it but what those concerned feel; not what a majority thinks but how a minority reacts, for our objective always is to produce a sense of fulfilment in the minds of the minority.

When I speak of Urdu, I include the Urdu or Persian script. This may be alien to us in some historical sense, but it has been in use in India to a considerable extent for many hundreds of years. It has been and is today a link with the world of Western Asia and partly Central Asia. It connects us politically and otherwise with countries whose friendship is important to us.

From the cultural point of view, Urdu brings in some trends which have in the past strengthened Hindi and in future might well do so. It is of course not a rival of Hindi; it cannot be. It may even gradually lessen in significance in India. That will be a historical development. Gradually Hindi and Urdu might well approximate in phraseology

and structure. The Nagari script is bound to become much more widespread as it should. But to endeavour to do this by creating an impression of suppressing Urdu and its script is a bad policy and is a narrowing of our cultural outlook. Incidentally, it is opposed to the scheme of our Constitution.

But I am most concerned with the effect produced on large numbers. Even if that effect appears to us to be unreasonable, it is nevertheless a fact to be reckoned with both from the political and the cultural points of view. We have to meet that situation wisely. There can be no doubt that there is a very strong feeling of distress and frustration, which is not confined to Muslims alone, but which is shared by a considerable number of Hindus and others, in regard to present policies being pursued relating to Urdu and its script. In some provinces, Government have taken definite steps to discourage Urdu and have stopped giving aid to schools where Urdu is taught. Many children and their parents who want to learn Urdu have no opportunity of doing so. Active and aggressive campaigns against Urdu are in progress in many places, as if Urdu were some dangerous enemy in our ranks. If that is so, then we tend to make those who believe in it also feel not only unhappy but rather hostile. I feel strongly on this subject because all my cultural standards are affected by it. Even more so, the future integration of India appears to me to suffer. Most of us seem to have forgotten the wisdom that inspired Gandhiji in his approach to some of the vital problems of our country. Among them was the language problem and he laid the greatest stress on our encouraging Urdu. Conditions have changed since then and perhaps we cannot go as far as Gandhiji wanted us to go in this respect. But the basic approach must still be the same and it would be an ill day if we surrendered to popular clamour and prejudice in this or any other matter.

The feeling of nationalism is an enlarging and widening experience for the individual or the nation. More especially, when a country is under foreign domination, nationalism is a strengthening and unifying force. But, a stage arrives when it might well have a narrowing influence. Sometimes, as in Europe, it becomes aggressive and chauvinistic and wants to impose itself on other countries and other people. Every people suffer from the strange delusion that they are the elect and better than all others. When they become strong and powerful, they try to impose themselves and their ways on others. In their attempt to do so, sometime or other, they overreach themselves, stumble and fall. That has been the fate of the intense nationalism of Germany and Japan.

But a more insidious form of nationalism is the narrowness of mind that it develops within a country, when a majority thinks itself as the entire nation and in its attempt to absorb the minority actually separates them even more. We, in India, have to be particularly careful of this because of our tradition of caste and separatism. We have a tendency to fall into separate groups and to forget the larger unity.

Communal organizations are the clearest examples of extreme narrowness of outlook, strutting about in the guise of nationalism. In the name of unity, they separate and destroy. In social terms they represent reaction of the worst type. We may condemn these communal organizations, but there are many others who are not free from this narrow influence. Oddly enough, the very largeness of India, which is a world in itself, tends to make the people living in it complacent, rather ignorant of the rest of the world, and narrow-minded. We have to contend against these forces. . . .

There is another and different matter to which I should like to draw your attention. That relates to women. During the last general

election, I laid great stress on having women candidates. In spite of my efforts, relatively few women were put up as candidates or were elected. In our political organizations today there are not many women functioning, and yet the standard of Indian womanhood is high, and Indian women have brought us more credit in the world than perhaps the men. A nation cannot go far ahead unless it gives full scope to its women. The Chinese resolution was important in many ways, but an aspect of it, which is perhaps not so well known, was the great change it brought about in the status of women. This was the basic revolution.

Apart from these reasons, there is the strictly political reason of women forming roughly half our electorate. Having given them the vote, we must follow it up by opening out other doors to them. If we do not give them these opportunities, then we ignore half the electorate which obviously is the height of unwisdom.

*From a letter dated 1 December 1953*

The problem of refugees from West Pakistan has not been wholly solved. But we have gone a long way towards solving it, and probably in another twelve months or so, only the hard core of it will remain. In Bengal, however, the other problem of refugees from East Pakistan is still in a somewhat fluid condition. Progress has certainly been made and the general situation is quiet, but much remains to be done. A trickle of evacuees from East Pakistan continues to come to West Bengal. The numbers are not great. On the other hand, a fair number of Muslims cross over to Pakistan from India, via Rajasthan and Sind, daily.

Why do these Muslims cross over to Pakistan at the rate of three or four thousand a month? This is worth enquiring into, because it is not to our credit that this should be so. Mostly they come from

Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan or Delhi. It is evident that they do not go there unless there is some fear or pressure on them. Some may go in the hope of employment there. But most of them appear to feel that there is no great future for them in India. I have already drawn your attention to difficulties in the way of Government service. Another reason, I think, is the fear of the evacuee property laws. I have always considered these laws both in India and in Pakistan as most inequitous. In trying to punish a few guilty persons, we punish or injure large numbers of perfectly innocent people. We must not judge merely by the cases that come up before us or those against whom proceedings are taken. The pressure of the evacuee property laws applies to almost all Muslims in certain areas of India. They cannot easily dispose of their property or carry on trade for fear that the long arm of this law might not hold them in its grip. It is this continuing fear that comes in the way of normal functioning and normal business and exercises a powerful pressure on large numbers of Muslims in India, especially in the North and West. Cases have been reported to me where undoubted injustice has been done. But I was told that the law was the law and nothing could remedy that injustice. Other cases have come to me where the officers in charge have been reported to have behaved with extreme discourtesy. That is bad and it gives a bad name to our country and our Government. I hope that in your State you will take particular care that this does not happen and, indeed, that, if these laws are to continue, they should function as leniently and rarely as possible.

Should these laws continue? A normal answer would be that this is a reciprocal matter and we are perfectly prepared to do away with them if only Pakistan did likewise. This is not a satisfactory answer, because that means that the initiative lies with Pakistan and not with us. Pakistan's whole approach and policy are different from ours. What they do may fit in with that policy, but the same thing may

injure our policy. I think the time has come for us to face this issue and put an end to the future working of these evacuee property laws in India. After all, there are plenty of foreigners in India from Europe, America and elsewhere, who have perfect freedom to dispose of their property as they like. Why should that freedom be denied to people in India even though some of them might go to Pakistan later? It cannot make much difference in financial terms, but it does make a big difference from the political and psychological points of view. We cannot rub out what has already been done under these laws. The vast properties that are held by the custodians will continue to be held by them till some other arrangement is devised. But we certainly can say that all future functioning of these laws must stop and no one will be proceeded against whether he remains here or goes to Pakistan. If we take this step, as I think we should, it would bring tremendous relief to large numbers of Muslims in India and have a very good political effect, both in India and Pakistan.

*From a letter dated 26 April 1954*

I have written to you previously about a matter which has troubled me greatly and continues to exercise my mind. This is the question of minorities in India. I asked you once to find out the figures of recruitment of these minorities to our Services. The figures I received were unsatisfactory. Our Constitution is very good and our laws and rules and regulations are also fair. But the fact remains that in practice some of our minorities, and notably Muslims, suffer from a deep sense of frustration. They feel that the Services are not really open to them in any marked degree, whether defence, police or civil. In business, the evacuee property laws, which unfortunately continue even though they are not applied frequently, bear down upon them and restrict their opportunities. In elections to our

Assemblies and Parliament, it is not easy for Muslims to come in. Even in our public organizations, it is becoming increasingly difficult for proper Muslim representation. I know this is so in the Congress. It is easy for anyone to become a primary member of the Congress, but when it comes to any elective post, a Muslim is at a disadvantage and there are no reservations now anywhere. I imagine that this applies to other political and like organizations also. It is not that there is any anti-Muslim feeling as such, though sometimes even this is present. It is more the recrudescence of local and caste feelings.

This is very much so in so far as Muslims are concerned. To a slight extent this is so is regard to Christians also, apart from some southern regions like Travancore-Cochin state. Looking at these questions not from a party point of view but an all-India viewpoint, this is a very bad development, and we shall have to give serious thought to it because it may well lead to most unfortunate consequences. It is no good our criticizing the minority communities and telling them that they do not behave. It is always the duty and obligation of the majority to win the goodwill of the minorities by fair and even generous treatment. I fear that very often the majority community in India not only forgets the minorities but acts in a narrow-minded way, not realizing the far-reaching consequences of this. The whole structure of India and the process of emotional integration, which is so important, will be badly affected if we do not deal with this situation quickly and with vision and vigour. Even some of our old valiant Muslim stalwarts of our freedom struggle find themselves today pushed out and with no effective voice.

We must never forget that we take pride in having a secular State. That brings its duties and responsibilities and obligations which apply far more to the majority than to the minority groups. But apart from theory and the rightness of a particular policy, the

practical consequences of any other policy are of grave importance, for any other policy would inevitably lead to the encouragement of disruptive tendencies. I do not wish to exaggerate this matter and I do not think it has gone deep yet. But the mere presence of these tendencies is dangerous. What troubles me most is the way most of us do not attach much importance to this. The first thing to do is to realize the importance of this question and to set about thinking how to deal with it in all aspects of public and other activities. We play an increasingly greater role in world affairs and our voice is respected. But, after all, the strength of our position and the respect that it commands outside India will depend on what we do within our country.

*From a letter dated 15 June 1954*

I am deeply distressed at the turn the linguistic States controversy is taking. In spite of all our attempts to keep this controversy within the bounds of reason and good sense, people tend to become more and more passionate and aggressive. The most fantastic claims are sometimes made. At this particular juncture of the world's history, this is especially unfortunate. I do not know what we can do about it except to impress upon our people and, more especially, our Governments, that we should deal with this problem in a friendly and dispassionate way. Some people produce fancy schemes on the basis of logic, but totally devoid of common sense. We cannot uproot all our history just because some abstract logic requires it. Necessary changes should certainly be made, but the fewer the changes the better.

Another matter that has troubled me is the controversy about missionaries. It would be unfortunate if this is considered on the religious level. Apart from that being, I think, not in line with our Constitution and our being a secular State, it might encourage all

kinds of aggressive tendencies in our people. I have, therefore, endeavoured to deal with it on the political level only, that is, how far we can permit foreigners to come here on political and like grounds and where we should permit them to go, such as frontier areas, etc. I think that it is unsafe for us, on political grounds, to have large numbers of missionaries about. I have no objection on religious grounds, except that personally the evangelical activities of missionaries do not appeal to me. It must be remembered that, even under British rule and with everything in favour of foreign missionaries, their success in India was not great. Now conditions are totally different. Most of our Governments do not look with favour on such activities and public opinion generally is much opposed to them. Therefore, nothing much can happen, and all this fear and apprehension of what the Christian missionaries might do seems to he grossly exaggerated. It is true that in some of the tribal areas, trouble might be created. We can guard against it.

It is no sign of tolerance, or if I may say so with great respect, of any high culture to get excited over such matters. It is not the foreigner who will injure as much but our own wrong actions and intolerance. Even Hinduism, which has not been a proselytizing religion, has now developed certain aggressive wings which convert and re-convert. One hears of the shuddhi movement and all its effects. The Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. organization are aggressively Hindu and dislike non-Hindus, and indeed consider them as some kind of aliens in India. It is this that is dangerous for us because Hindus are the dominant element in India. If they do not show the fullest tolerance to the minority groups, then it will be bad for us.

I have drawn your attention previously to the condition of the minorities in India, more especially the Muslims, who are still in large numbers. In the Services and elsewhere, their opportunities

are progressively limited. If we are to be secular, stable, and strong State, our first consideration must be to give absolute fairplay to our minorities, and thus to make them feel completely at home in India. We are apt to preach to them too much as to what they should do and some condemn them. That does not help. We have to deal with the psychological reactions of large numbers of people. If by our activities we produce the wrong reactions and fear and apprehension, then we have failed, whatever logical justification we might give. Indeed, the only right attitude is to show generosity to these minority communities, who should be considered as a trust by us.

*From a letter dated 26 October 1955*

The political horizon in India has been completely overcast by the Report of the States Reorganization Commission and the reactions it has produced. I do not propose to discuss here the merits of the various proposals made. As you know, we have been giving the most careful thought to them and we shall continue to do so. We have consulted representatives from various States, often in disagreement with each other. In such matters, some kind of a logical and scientific approach, though desirable, does not lead us far. One has to take into consideration a large variety of factors. It is not a question of appeasing this group or that but, rather, of trying to evolve something which meets the largest measure of agreement and which avoids, as far as possible, the element of compulsion. . . .

Each one of us naturally has some view about this reorganization of States, both from the point of view of the principles involved and practical considerations. That is completely natural. But, constituted as I am, I fail to understand why this question should rouse so much passion and excited debate, not to mention threats of some action

or other. I feel unhappy and distressed at the picture of India that I see before me today. It seems to go counter to the basic principles on which we have stood and to the objectives that we have aimed at. In a democracy there should be the fullest freedom of expression of opinion and argument. There should also be some method of final decision which is accepted. If people go about saying that they will not accept a decision unless it is according to their own views, then that is the negation of democracy. It undermines the whole conception of the unity of India. It means that we are prepared to have unity provided that unity is fashioned after our liking, otherwise we reject that unity. It means that certain conditions which are less than national and which may be provincial, linguistic, communal or any other, have precedence over the broader national approach. We may differ, of course, as to what the national approach is; each one may think that his own approach is the true national approach. Who is to decide? Surely, the decision can only be made by the normal democratic process or else we bid goodbye to democracy, in addition to unity.

*From a letter dated 16 January 1956*

We attach the greatest importance to safeguards for linguistic minorities and others and I hope that this will find a prominent place in the legislation we have to promote. If these safeguards are adequate and are fully acted upon, then the sense of grievance which has sometimes been felt by linguistic or other minorities will largely vanish. But, after all, no safeguards are adequate, unless the will to give effect to them fully is present. It is thus of the highest importance that we approach this task in good faith and with the desire to do justice and more than justice to those who may be in the position of minorities.

Minorities may be, and sometimes have been, troublesome and have made exaggerated claims. In a democracy however, it is the will of the majority that ultimately prevails. The responsibility therefore rests on the majority not only to do justice to the minority but, what is much more important, to win over the goodwill and confidence of the minority group, whether it is linguistic, religious or other. . . .

In considering [the] difficult questions of reorganization, I have felt more and more that we should have fewer and larger States. I do not suggest any change now. We have had enough experience of facing changes. But I think it will be a worthwhile development later on for two or sometimes more States to join together to form a larger State. A suggestion was made that West Bengal and Bihar should form one large State. From any economic or planning point of view this is obviously desirable. The great industrial area of India lies partly in Bihar and partly in Bengal. River valley schemes overlap. Bengal has been reduced to a fraction of its former size. The co-operation of Bengal and Bihar would, I feel sure, be to the advantage of both. This suggestion, I was happy to find, met with a favourable response though obviously nothing could be done about it at this stage and it requires careful consideration. So also, at a later stage, we might have the joining together of some of the States in South India.

I think it will be true to say that this whole question of reorganization of States has created a most difficult problem and a critical situation for all of us. Suddenly, our weaknesses have come to the front and those who do not like us are pleased at these developments. How we, as a people, face this crisis is a matter of the greatest importance. Can we rise above our provincial or linguistic urges and desires, and consider the problem of India as a whole? Not only our reputation but our future is at stake. I earnestly hope that all of us, however strongly we might feel about any particular matter affecting our State, will now abide by the decisions taken and show

to ourselves and to the world how we can rise above even strongly felt differences.

*From a letter dated 26 March 1958*

I am writing to you about a matter which has troubled me greatly for a long time. That is the position of minority communities in India. Our Constitution lays down very good provisions and we are never tired of saying how well we deal with our minority communities. . . .

I want to lay stress on one particular aspect. This relates to the Services. In our present conditions in India, recruitment to the Services plays a very important part in producing a sense of satisfaction or the reverse in the minds of the minority groups. I have sometimes called for figures of recruitment and these have been very unsatisfactory in so far as the minorities are concerned.

When I have asked for an explanation, I have been told that recruitment was made by examinations and it is nobody's fault if people did not pass the tests.

That is not a good enough explanation. Firstly, there is a tendency for the minority group not to appear for these examinations in sufficient numbers because they imagine that things are weighted against them. Secondly, subjects and tests for the examinations also come in their way. For instance, in the Hindi-speaking areas especially, Hindi is a compulsory subject and the type of Hindi required is high-flown and difficult. Many people who know simple Hindi quite well cannot easily pass that difficult test. This applies often to Muslims in the Hindi-speaking areas. They know the Urdu version of Hindi and they learn Devanagri, etc., and try hard to improve their knowledge of the language. But this is no easy matter after a certain age. The result often is that while they are quite good in other subjects, they fail in Hindi.

*From a letter dated 18 May 1959*

It must be recognized that Muslims in India cannot, in the nature of things, adopt aggressive attitudes. Individuals may do so or occasionally small groups. But conditions in India are such and their numbers are relatively so small that any attempt at aggressive action would recoil on them. It is only when they become afraid that desperation seizes them and then they may act wrongly and aggressively. This fact has to be kept in mind because without realizing this we shall fail to act correctly or take proper measures. Basically, the responsibility for communal peace rests on the majority community, that is, the Hindus. If there is a breach of this peace, I would start with the presumption that it has been caused by Hindu communal elements who have created a situation leading to fear and conflict. Indeed, this is not a question of Hindu or Muslim, but of the majority always being responsible for this kind of thing.

We must also remember that Muslims are very poorly represented in our Services today, whether civil or police or military. They have thus a feeling of isolation. Many of our servicemen, however much they may try to be impartial, as they do, may still have some background of prejudice. Because of all this, State Governments, District authorities and the police have always to remember this background and to keep wide awake. They must not permit any type of communal propaganda in speech or news-sheets and nip this in the bud. This is not usually done and I have seen some news-sheets and reports of speeches which are highly objectionable and yet nothing has been done. District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police are more particularly responsible for any wrong development or disturbance in their areas. I have long been convinced that if the District authorities are competent and wide awake, there will be no communal disturbances there. Because of this conviction I start

with the presumption that where there is a disturbance, the District authorities have failed, to some extent at least. It would be a good thing if these District authorities are made to realize this fully. In particular, they must realize that it is their duty to gain the goodwill of, and to protect, the minority communities. . . .

Whatever the actual facts might be, even if an impression is created that the police are not impartial, this is bad. It should be the function of police to establish a reputation for impartiality and good service.

Whenever any major communal disturbance takes place, there should be an enquiry. I do not think it is right for us to follow a policy of hush-hush in such matters or be afraid that in case of an enquiry the morale of the Services might suffer. Morale suffers more by allowing wrong things to happen and then keeping quiet over them.

*From a letter dated 27 June 1961*

I have referred above to efficiency and to our getting out of our traditional ruts. This necessitates our getting out of the old habit of reservations and particular privileges being given to this caste or that group. The recent meeting we held here, at which the Chief Ministers were present, to consider national integration, laid down that help should be given on economic considerations and not on caste. It is true that we are tied up with certain rules and conventions about helping the scheduled castes and tribes. They deserve help but, even so, I dislike any kind of reservation, more particularly in Services. I react strongly against anything which leads to inefficiency and second-rate standards. I want my country to be a first class country in everything. The moment we encourage the second-rate, we are lost.

The only real way to help a backward group is to give opportunities of good education, this includes technical education which is becoming more and more important. Everything else is provision

of some kind of crutches which do not add to the strength or health of the body. We have made recently two decisions which are very important: one is, universal free elementary education, that is the base; and the second is scholarships on a very wide scale at every grade of education to the bright boys and girls, and this applies not merely to literary education, but, much more so, to technical, scientific and medical training. I lay stress on the bright and able boys and girls because it is only they who will raise our standards. I have no doubt that there is a vast reservoir of potential talent in this country if only we can give it opportunity.

But if we go in for reservations on communal and caste basis, we swamp the bright and able people and remain second-rate or third-rate. I am grieved to learn of how far this business of reservation has gone based on communal considerations. It has amazed me to learn that even promotions are based sometimes on communal or caste considerations. This way lies not only folly, but disaster. Let us help the backward groups by all means, but never at the cost of efficiency.

# II

# THE INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY

'We must remember that what our governments are doing today will set the tone for future administrations. The very powers that may be exercised, perhaps for adequate reasons today, may be exercised later for totally inadequate and perhaps even for objectionable reasons. It is always unsafe to weaken on principles.'

As independent India's first prime minister, Nehru was charged with consolidating its democratic structure. In the excerpts that follow, we notice how Nehru gave concrete shape to the ideal of self-government. High on the list of principles he associated with democratic rule was strict vigilance over the instruments of law and force. Whether in his concern over the abuse of security legislation, objections against pre-censorship, or call for a measured approach towards violent protests, Nehru urged the cautious use of state power. He also emphasized public reasoning and justification as central to democratic participation and accountability, as revealed in the excerpts on land reform and its surrounding constitutional controversies. Democracy was, Nehru insisted, in perpetual need of nourishment. Only political practice, rather than grand theory, could create public trust and confidence. This ideal could be easily corroded by corruption, nepotism and, above all, 'a general weakening of the moral fibre'.

*From a letter dated 22 November 1947*

There is one matter which I should specially like to mention to you and that is the relation of the Governor and the Ministers in each

province. The Governor is a constitutional head now and the burden of responsibility falls on the Ministry. But that certainly does not mean that the Governor should be ignored. As a matter of fact, many of the Governors at present are old and valued colleagues of ours. We sent them to the provinces because we wanted to give every help to the provinces. Some of the provinces have in fact profited by the presence of a new Governor a good deal. There has been every cooperation between the Ministry and the Governor, and he has been able to help and advise his Ministry. In some cases, however, the Governor has been rather isolated and the Ministry have not developed the practice of conferring with him, sending papers to him or of taking his advice. This is very unfortunate and it means our wasting some of our best men when they could be perhaps more usefully employed elsewhere. If we find that a Governor is not being utilised sufficiently in a particular province, then we shall have to consider the question of removing him from the province and giving him some more worthwhile work to do.

In strict constitutional practice, the Governor should be kept informed of all important happenings and should be consulted by the Prime Minister or other Ministers in regard to every important step taken, such as legislation, economic policy and the like. We have a tremendous number of difficult problems to face and the Ministry should welcome the help and advice which an experienced and well-tried Governor can give. I trust, therefore, that where there is not this full cooperation between the Governor and the Ministry, a change will come about leading to frequent consultation and cooperation.

*From a letter dated 1 April 1948*

The resignation of members of the Socialist Party from the Congress is a major event in our domestic politics. However most of us might

view this, there is general regret that many old Congressmen should have found it necessary to leave the old moorings. From every other point of view, it is desirable that nothing should be said or done to add to the rift that has been created. The times are too critical for us to add to our differences and our difficulties. . . .

In [a strike in Calcutta] as well as in other parts of the country, the Communist Party has played a leading role, and many of their members have openly declared that they are out to fight the government in every way. The West Bengal Government, as you know, has banned the Communist Party. This was done without any reference to us. Normally this procedure is undesirable because any such action leads to repercussions and is therefore to be considered in its larger context. The Government of India later suggested to provincial governments that any member of the Communist Party suspected of organising trouble, more specially in the security services, might be arrested and detained. There was no intention of banning the Communist Party or indeed of large-scale arrests. I hope your government would bear this in mind and only detain such persons against whom you have some proof that they are indulging in dangerous activities.

*From a letter dated 15 April 1948*

[A] number of members of the Communist Party have been recently arrested in various provinces. The Communist Party as such has not been banned except by the West Bengal Government, and there is no intention of banning it or interfering with its legitimate activities. But some of the activities in the recent past have been far from legitimate and have created grave disorder. There has been open incitement for the collection of arms and violence, and sabotage has been feared. What has recently happened in Burma is a pointer to what might

happen here. It was with the greatest regret that action of this kind of arresting and interning people was taken by government. As you will realise, this goes against the grain, and we want to limit it as far as possible. In spite of all efforts, mistakes are made by local officials and one glaring case of such a mistake was in one province where a leading member of the Communist Party who had long been ill and who was actually under a high temperature, was arrested. He died a few days later in prison. It was, of course, totally unnecessary and undesirable to arrest a man who was very ill and government's case is necessarily weakened when such instances occur through thoughtlessness. We have to be very careful in having recourse to repressive measures because the appetite grows with use and it appears a simple way out of a difficulty. But as believers of civil liberty know, the consequences are apt to be bad, and a popular government like ours has to be particularly careful.

*From a letter dated 5 May 1948*

One of the great dangers to Indian states—a danger which to a large extent we escaped in Indian provinces—is the administrative vacuum that has been created since the 15th August. Few states have an appropriate administrative machinery or departments dealing with nation-building activities. So long as the paramount power was in existence, a certain rather low standard of administration was maintained. The machine worked though at a low level, and the paramount power could, to some extent, control the discontent arising out of maladministration. With the lapse of paramountcy and the unleashing of popular forces, it is of the utmost importance to create in the states an administrative apparatus that will deal efficiently and sympathetically with the urgent needs of the population. The need for creating such an apparatus becomes all the

greater when unions are formed, because the conception of a union is a new conception involving a new loyalty.

As a matter of fact, the question of overhauling the administrative machinery of government is very much before us. My experience here has led me to the conclusion that our present machinery is to some extent archaic, and is certainly not conducive to rapid and efficient handling of matters. There is a great deal of lack of coordination and red tape and unnecessary noting. There are bottlenecks, and the best of schemes are held up somewhere for weeks and even months. . . .

I would like you to give some thought in your province also to the question of the reorganisation of government machinery with a view to seeing whether it is functioning at the maximum possible level of efficiency. There is a great deal of complaint from the public about our inefficiency, inaccessibility, delays and above all, of corruption. I fear that many of these complaints are justified. We are perhaps busy, as all of us are, in our respective offices. We are rather apt to grow self-complacent and imagine that all is well in this best of all possible worlds. I suggest that all of us should remember always Lord Acton's famous dictum about power.

This leads me to the various security measures that have been taken by the Central and provincial governments.* I have no doubt that essentially these have been necessary. We have seen how a certain slackness on the part of government in Burma has led to widespread disorder and even rebellion. We live in India in a strange and abnormal atmosphere, the aftermath of the occurrences in the Punjab and elsewhere. There are vast masses of refugees full of bitterness. Any relaxation of vigilance may lead to disastrous consequences.

* Local police had been given wide powers of arrest and detention under Public Safety Acts.

Nevertheless, the fact remains, that once large powers are given to executive and police officers, they are likely to be misused. Indeed, I have had instances of such misuse. I am sorry to say that all the reputation that we acquired in the past as defenders of civil liberty and freedom is fading away. . . .

The Government of India suggested to provincial governments some time back that special individuals suspected of dangerous activities leading to sabotage might be arrested and detained. The situation was a difficult one and there was a possibility then of big scale trouble. In making these arrests provincial governments adopted a varying procedure. Some arrested a few persons whom they specially suspect, others made large-scale arrests which could hardly be justified on individual grounds.

I am rather worried about this tendency all over India to use special measures against people we may not like. Even when temporarily justified, this creates the wrong kind of background, and more and more we depend upon these special measures and the police. In the long run, and even in the short run, this is bad for the country, for the people, and for the Congress, which is held responsible. I would, therefore, beg of you to examine this matter carefully. The responsibility for your provinces is, of course, yours and we should not like to interfere with it in any way.

I am particularly concerned about the growth of corruption, both at the Centre, and in the provinces. This must be tackled efficiently or else we shall sink in this morass. One of our immediate problems is transport. We lack wagons, locomotives, etc., but I think there could be a considerable improvement if the element of corruption was removed. This, of course, applies to all departments. It is generally said by the public that they cannot get anything done without some kind of bribery to some official.

*From a letter dated 3 August 1948*

I have written to you often enough on the subject of detenus or people kept in prison or detention without trial. Circumstances may compel us to do this, and circumstances in India today are bad, and we will not take a risk which may lead to violent repercussions. Subject to this, I would again ask you to consider how far it is desirable to keep people for long in detention without trial. This has a bad effect on our reputation and I continue to receive large numbers of protests from every part of the world. I cannot advise you because the responsibility is yours and you have to judge finally. I only wish to point out to you the dangers of continuing a policy which ultimately probably depends on the judgement of police officers or the like, and which tends to become stabilised as a method of government. It must always be remembered that this is not a normal or proper method of government or administration and that it can only be indulged in in cases of grave emergency. It is true that there is emergency in India today. I would suggest to you, what indeed some provinces have done, that a panel of senior judicial officers, preferably High Court judges, might be asked to examine, privately, all cases of detention, and to advise government what action to take in regard to them. It is obviously something that does not redound to the credit of government that High Courts should pass strictures on government when such matters are brought before them.

*From a letter dated 16 August 1948*

Before you get this letter you will have learnt of the resignation of our Finance Minister, Shri Shanmukham Chetty, and of our

acceptance of it.* I made it clear that there is no question of our doubting the *bona fides* of Shri Shanmukham Chetty. Nevertheless, some things were done which can only be described as a grave error of judgement. In such matters, we have felt that we must have the highest standard of public conduct and so I have agreed with deep regret to accept his resignation. I trust that this occurrence will help both our provincial ministries and the general public in realising that in public affairs only the highest standards must be maintained, and that even *bona fide* errors cannot be tolerated. . . .

Recently there has been much criticism of certain legislative measures in a province which tend to deprive High Courts of their normal powers. Sometimes, ordinances are issued, and at other times, the provincial assembly deals with the matter. I have written to you on several occasions about the growing tendency to restrict individual and group freedom. In a crisis, much can be said in justification of this, and we live in days of crisis. Nevertheless, it is a dangerous path to tread and governments get used to very special measures which they cannot do without later. For us, with our past record in regard to civil liberty, this is a peculiarly distasteful course.

In any event, any attempt to limit the powers of a High Court or to prevent it from judging executive action in the normal way is fraught with grave consequences. The judiciary are supposed to be the defenders of freedom within the law. If they cannot even do this then one of their chief functions vanishes. The reputation of High Courts, which has been high, suffers. I would, therefore, earnestly request you to keep this in mind and not to interfere with the High Court's discretion or to put too many restrictions on individual freedom.

* The minister was involved in a controversy regarding the withdrawal of income tax cases against some industrialists.

This is particularly applicable to habeas corpus applications and to the freedom of association in trade unions, etc. In many countries in the world today there are labour or semi-labour governments. For them it is a creed that trade unions must have freedom. Anything that lessens it, therefore, is objected to by them. I continue to receive from foreign countries, and especially from trade unions in foreign countries, letters and telegrams of protest expressing their surprise and dismay at some things that our Government have done.

So far as High Courts are concerned, we have been advised by high judicial authority that even if an ordinance or other kind of legislation comes in the way of a High Court issuing the writ of habeas corpus, the right of the High Courts will not be affected in this regard. Our Draft Constitution expressly preserves this right of the High Courts. We have, therefore, officially advised provincial governments that it is undesirable to oust the jurisdiction of High Courts in habeas corpus applications under the Public Safety Act.

*From a letter dated 1 September 1948*

As you know, our Finance Minister, Shri Shanmukham Chetty, resigned from his high and responsible office a short while ago. As I stated in the Assembly, I do not think that Shri Chetty was guilty of anything more than a grave error of judgment. Nevertheless, it became important for him to resign. While I regret the departure of an able colleague in this way, I trust that this incident will indicate to all concerned that our desire is to maintain high standards in our public life. There is sometimes a tendency to slacken and to gloss over errors. In the public interest, it is better not to do so even if individuals occasionally suffer. We have yet to develop the discipline of a free and democratic country. . . .

The Hyderabad situation* has arrived at a stage when some kind of a positive action on our behalf may be needed. . . . I shall only warn you to take all necessary measures for internal security. Reports sometimes reach us of intrigues by some Muslims here and there. There may be some such intrigues but it is clear that any large-scale trouble from the Muslims as such in India is exceedingly unlikely. There is a far greater possibility of communal trouble started by non-Muslims as a reaction to events in Hyderabad. That has to be strictly guarded against, for it will be dangerous to allow any such development to take place. We have a special duty to protect our minorities and we cannot permit individuals or groups to take the law into their own hands, especially at a moment of national crisis. If we allow things to go wrong even in a small way, it will be difficult for us to correct them later. . . .

We function on the world stage today in a glare of publicity. If anything happens in India which is criticised or condemned outside, it will react very much to our disadvantage. Whatever we do, therefore, we must follow the right path and not imagine that a narrow opportunism of the moment, if it leads us astray, can possibly benefit us in the end. As a democratic government, we are the servants of the public and must give effect to their wishes. But this does not mean that we should permit wrong things to be done because members of the public unthinkingly ask us to do them. A party or a nation gains both prestige and success by adhering to the right policy, even though it may not bring immediate results.

*From a letter dated 4 October 1948*

[The incorporation of Hyderabad] is not a reversion to the old paramountcy of the British power, because such paramountcy can

* Reports were received regarding the commission of atrocities by the Razakars.

only be exercised by an alien authority or an autocratic regime. In a democratic India it has no place, for each part of India should have the same freedom and status as any other. Every state, therefore, necessarily has or will have the same status as a province in regard to representative institutions or individual freedom. In other words, lndia will be a free partnership of provinces and states which have a large measure of autonomy, but which are at the same time tied up closely to the Centre in whose direction they all share. . . .

Ever since the partition and the horrible things that followed, Muslims in India have been very hard hit, psychologically even more so than otherwise. They have not felt sure of their position in this country. Gradually things have been improving, and Hyderabad has helped this process very greatly. It is for us now to take full advantage of this new atmosphere and produce the sense of absolute security in the minds of the Muslims and other minorities. The majority always owes a duty of this kind to minorities. We must not think in terms of copying what Pakistan does or think of retaliation. Both Hindu and Muslim, as well as Sikh or Christian or Parsi, must believe that they are as good citizens of India as anyone else. Therefore, I suggest to you that, while we should exercise vigilance, we should act generously and shed fear. If our governments function in this way, they will also help in removing the fear complex from other minds.

We have to face another difficulty and that is the Communist attempt to create trouble. Fortunately this has not succeeded in India, but we have to be completely prepared for attempts at trouble of this kind. These must be nipped in the bud and not allowed to grow. We have not yet rid ourselves of that atmosphere of violence and disorder which came with partition. Any activity therefore which tends to violence, is more dangerous now than it might be in a more peaceful state of affairs.

[We] must be careful in checking all violent manifestations, we must be equally careful in drawing the line at peaceful agitation. I have frequently written to you to exercise care and restraint in the suppression of civil liberties. To us, who preach civil liberty at a thousand occasions, any suppression is painful. When the vital needs of the State demand such suppression, it has to be undertaken, but there is always a danger of exceeding the necessities of a situation. A government with the power to change laws quickly by ordinance is apt to use that power too frequently.

I have noticed legislation by ordinance or otherwise becoming progressively harsh in regard to civil liberties. I must confess that I am greatly perturbed at this prospect. Such legislation should normally not be proceeded with without reference to the Government of India, that is to say the Home Ministry. It is obvious that the law and order problem in India is an integrated one and cannot be dealt with separately with any great success. It is obvious also that any organised subversive activity is also an all-India problem. Therefore, the Government of India must be kept fully in the picture by provincial governments.

I have found that the provincial governments do not do so and proceed with legislation without any reference to the Government of India. It is only later that they inform them. I do not challenge the authority of the provincial governments in doing this, but I would like to point out the propriety of always consulting the Centre before any such step in the nature of legislation is taken. . . .

It is particularly undesirable that the power of the High Courts should be set at naught in regard to individual liberty. That is always a sign of weakness for an executive. . . .

It may be that normal proceedings in a High Court are not desirable in all cases as this involves placing of secret matter before the Court. But it should always be possible to consult the High Court

judge privately. Indeed some such procedure has been laid down in many of the ordinances or acts of provinces. I do not understand, however, why this consultation should be delayed. As it is in many cases, sometimes, indeed, the period of delay has been extended by legislation. This indicates a fear of the High Court or of the judge of the High Court which is not becoming of a provincial government.

We must remember that what our governments are doing today will set the tone for future administrations. The very powers that may be exercised, perhaps for adequate reasons today, may be exercised later for totally inadequate and perhaps even for objectionable reasons. It is always unsafe to weaken on principles. . . .

There is one matter to which I should like to draw your special attention. Governments, both central and provincial, have a great deal of financial patronage at their disposal in regard to licences, contracts, etc. It is important that this patronage should not go to any individual whose record in regard to payment of income tax has been bad. This matter specially concerns the various departments of the Government of India and I have drawn their attention to it. I have asked them to keep in close touch with our Income Tax Department in regard to the granting of any such financial patronage. In so far as this concerns your government, I hope you will be good enough to bear this in mind. People who are suspected of defrauding government revenues cannot be made recipients of government favour financially.

*From a letter dated 16 November 1948*

There is one matter which has made me think hard and I want to share my apprehension with you. I think there has been a deterioration in the work of our public services. To some extent this was perhaps inevitable because of the rapid changes that have taken place and the

quick promotions which have followed. Nevertheless, it a disturbing development and we have to be on our guard against it. One reason for this deterioration appears to me to be due to an excess of provincialism which sometimes sacrifices quality in favour of some man from the same province. We have many first-rate men in our services. But it is true that the number of really good men for a country like India is really limited. Whatever policy we might adopt, it is ultimately the human material that counts. If we lower the tone of the material, our work will suffer greatly. The British Government in India, in spite of its numerous failings, had set up a more or less efficient administration for the purposes they had in view. Those purposes were not always to our liking and were sometimes directly opposed to our objectives. Nevertheless, an efficient administration was worthwhile and a good thing. It would be most unfortunate if we lose this legacy and allow our administration to deteriorate. We have, of course, to change the whole tone of that administration and give it different objectives. But efficient it must remain, or else all our work becomes sloppy and bad. Therefore, in this matter, any other consideration, such as provincialism, must not be allowed to come in the way.

This applies more specially to those services and branches of activity which require experts of any kind, for instance, medicine, science, technology, etc. I have noticed a tendency to remove able and experienced medical men from their posts in order to make room for some provincial person who is obviously not so good. I do hope that you will encourage no such tendency.

*From a letter dated 16 April 1949*

At the recent conference . . . the question of the Communist Party was discussed. It was considered whether the Communist Party should be banned or not. . . .

No one is in any doubt about the highly injurious activities of the Communist Party of India. Those activities, as I have stated in Parliament, have bordered on open revolt and have increasingly taken the shape of sabotage or even terrorism. Because of this the Central Government and the provincial governments have taken strong action against the members of the Communist Party of India. That action will continue so long as the situation necessitates it.

The question is whether banning the Party in India will in the balance have more favourable results and will strengthen the hands of government or not. To some extent, it may be said that banning gives a free hand to the authorities to deal with subversive elements. On the other hand, that free hand has been given to the authorities and widespread action has been taken. The Communist Party of India, though not illegal, is in effect functioning more or less as an underground organisation with a public facade. Banning will not make much difference to this and the underground activities will only be intensified.

A fact always to remember and to bring out is that the Communist Party members in India are following the policy of sabotage and terrorism. If we ban the Party this aspect of sabotage and terrorism will rather fade out from people's minds and it will be thought that the banning is due to ideological reasons. Communists here, and elsewhere, will stand up as defenders of a certain ideology and will try to hide under that cloak their subversive and terroristic activities. It is most important that we should distinguish between these two and should lay stress on their present policy of sabotage and terrorism and not allow them to shift the point of attack. . . .

Generally speaking, therefore, banning does not give any greater powers to deal with an organization which is essentially functioning underground. The slight balance in favour of banning is rather

outweighed by Communists posing as ideological martyrs instead of saboteurs and terrorists.

*From a letter dated 14 May 1949*

The law and order problem was . . . discussed at length at [a recent Governors'] conference. It was clear that it was the primary duty of governments to maintain law and order and to meet any challenge made to it. As the Communist Party of India has made that challenge, it had to be effectively met. Two points were, however, stressed. One was that we should try to keep apart the violence and sabotage part of the Communist Party's programme in India from their normal ideological approach. That is to say our action against the Communist Party members is because they indulge in violence and sabotage and openly say so in their circulars, etc., and not because they hold certain opinions. It is important that this difference be made, as otherwise, some people might be misled into thinking that we are attacking a way of thinking and not violent activities against the State.

The second point that was mentioned was that while police and like measures are essential to meet with any challenge to the State, it is even more necessary to have a positive policy to remove grievances and to keep in touch with the people. Unfortunately, most of us have got so entangled in administrative or other duties that we tend to lose touch with the masses. This leaves them an easy prey for any kind of agitation. Therefore, it is essential to develop full contacts with the masses, to explain to them our difficulties and seek their cooperation; also to have a definite and positive policy for their betterment.

It was further pointed out at the Governors' Conference that there was a tendency among provincial governments to rely increasingly

on the repressive aspect of the State in meeting difficult situations. While this was inevitable in certain circumstances, it was not normally the best or the safest way of dealing with any matter. It is seldom that any idea or any really earnest person is crushed by repression as every Congressman knows by his own experience. We have thrived on repression. This has always to be kept in mind or else we shall get more and more entangled in a vicious circle. There have recently been firings as a result of which women have died. Those women were actually behaving in a most violent manner and causing casualties on the side of the police. It becomes inevitable for the police to fire when they are themselves attacked. Nevertheless, this business of women being shot at and killed, leaves a very bad taste in the minds of people and credit of governments does not go up in the eyes of people in India or abroad. We have, therefore, to strike a balance and to keep vigilant that the police or others do not forget the importance of dealing with situations as far as possible without adopting these extreme measures.

*From a letter dated 3 June 1949*

There is at present a great deal of agitation going on in various parts of India by various groups against the governments and the Congress. Unfortunately, in most parts of India there is not sufficient work being done on the part of Congressmen. Government as such cannot function in the way the Congress should function. It has become urgently necessary therefore that we should deal with the problems that arise and the criticism that is made in a positive way. No major difficulty is solved by mere repression, though that becomes inevitable when a challenge to the security of the State is made. We have to consider economic programmes and the removal, as far as

possible, of the difficulties that face the people. Unfortunately this cannot be done suddenly. But even apart from this, it is necessary to develop a personal and human touch with our people in the villages especially which Congressmen used to do so effectively in the past. Our people should go about the villages and other places explaining the situation and pointing out our difficulties. This personal touch, if carried on in a friendly and human way, goes far. We seem to have lost that touch and very few people go about as they used to in the old days. The result is that the public comes into contact only with the critics and opponents of government and sees Congress only as a governmental machinery. It is urgently necessary that this aspect of the problem before us should be considered both by our Ministers and our colleagues in the Congress. . . .

Regarding the Communists, I have frequently pointed out to you that the problem before us is not one of fighting any economic doctrine or ideological approach, whether we agree with it or not. What we are up against today is an open, deliberate, aggressive and violent challenge to the very basis of Government. It is a kind of revolt which includes in its scope many kinds of violence, murder, loot and sabotage. It is this that we have to combat and not any theory or ideology. This fact should be emphasized because otherwise people in India or in foreign countries imagine that we are suppressing merely differences of opinion. As a matter of fact, anyone who reads periodicals opposed to Government will realise to what extreme lengths virulent and even false criticism is permitted to exist. I do not mind criticism, however strong. But I do object to falsehood and I object even more to vulgarity. I must confess to a feeling of depression when I see how some of our newspapers and periodicals stoop to this falsehood and vulgarity, thus bringing down the whole standard of our press. Of course, this does not apply to many newspapers and periodicals.

*From a letter dated 4 June 1949*

We discuss communism and have to take steps against the violent and subversive activities of the Communist Party in India. That is natural and inevitable. Yet the real problem is something bigger than communism—it is what lies behind communism, it is an economic distemper coming at a time when expectations have been roused and some kind of political consciousness has come into existence among vast masses of the people. . . .

Most Congressmen seem to be unaware of these grave developments in Asia, or if they are aware, they do not attach sufficient importance to them in relation to India. Socialists carry on petty agitations and satyagraha, and are equally unaware of this fundamental position. Most people think in terms of the elections to come. But much may happen before these elections. I ventured to say at a press interview some time ago that the socialists were completely static in their outlook. I think this is perfectly true in spite of their revolutionary slogans. I would add that Congressmen are also often equally static. In a rapidly changing world, nothing is more dangerous than the static state of mind and complacency. We, who are burdened with governmental responsibility, face a multitude of problems from day-to-day and do our best to solve them. We hardly have time to think of basic issues. Sometimes we get excited about matters, of importance no doubt, but which are not only irrelevant but full of danger in the present context of things. Thus, separatist tendencies and provincialism, linguistic provinces, even the question of language, or petty reforms to make people more moral by law or compulsion, absorb our minds. We seem to think that our fight for freedom is over and we can now have the luxury of having fierce arguments about other matters. In any real sense of the word, this fight for freedom is not over, though we may be politically free. It is

not over in the economic sense and even politically, we have to be continually vigilant. That vigilance is not only necessary because of the curious state of affairs that exists in Pakistan and in the minds of Pakistan's leaders, but even more so because of the other basic factors to which I have referred above. Our contacts with the masses diminish. We take them for granted and that is always a perilous thing to do. We rely on our past prestige and achievements. There is something in that and we have indeed carried on because of that. But past capital cannot last for ever and living on capital without earning anything is apt to lead to bankruptcy.

Even in regard to the food position, as I have written to you in my fortnightly letter, there is not an acute awareness of the problem or of our duty. I have often criticised the habits some of us are getting into of continually running down ourselves, our administration, and our people. I think all this is exaggerated, though undoubtedly all these evils exist and have to be fought. But the real evil is not just corruption and nepotism, but a general weakening of the moral fibre. This shows itself in so many ways. The great urge that carried us forward during the past quarter of a century, based on a sense of duty and willingness to sacrifice for a cause, is not visible except in odd individuals.

I have ventured to write to you in this vein because I am anxious that you and your colleagues, and through you others, might give earnest thought to all these matters. I have supreme faith in India, a faith which transcends even an accumulation of faults and futilities on our part. Nevertheless, India will only go ahead by our earnest and concentrated efforts and our acting as men and women of vision, who are not pushed hither and thither by petty conflicts or passions of the moment. Fascism arises and grows when we lose this vision and think in petty terms. Communalism and the R.S.S. movement are products of this and exhibit an amazing narrowness in outlook, even

from the opportunist point of view. Communism certainly attracts idealists as well as opportunists. But the way it functions is devoid completely of any moral standard or even any thought for India's good. It thinks in other terms. Yet because there is an element of idealism in it. it draws earnest young men and women. Those who are impelled by a faith in a cause can seldom be crushed by superior force. They can only be defeated by higher idealism as well as vision and a capacity to work for the cause that represents these objectives.

*From a letter dated 1 July 1949*

We have had to deal in the past two years with very difficult law and order problems, and we have been forced to enact legislation both at the Centre and in the provinces, which is in the nature of repressive legislation. We have done so with the greatest reluctance because the safety of the State was the paramount consideration for us. On, the whole, we have succeeded in checking dangerous anti-social elements. It is true, however, that we have been strongly criticised for this legislation both at the Centre and in the provinces, and the fact that large numbers of people have been kept under detention has not added to our general credit as governments.

I think it is time that we reviewed this position fully. It is true that there are dangerous elements abroad. It is obvious that the Communist Party of India is openly bent on pursuing violent methods trying to create disorder and chaos. Their objective appears to be a purely negative one, because it is quite clear that they cannot make much difference to India if they proceeded on democratic lines. In any general election in India, they will not make much difference. Therefore, neither the Centre nor any province can lessen its vigilance. We can take no risk where the interests of the State are concerned. More particularly, any attempt at violence must

be severely put down. It must be made absolutely clear that any violent methods against the State will be dealt with with the greatest firmness. At the same time, where violence is not involved, we should adopt a far more generous attitude. We have been criticised a great deal by High Courts, and many people who have been detained, have been released by High Courts, on applications being made under the habeas corpus provisions. We have to take note of this fact. It has also been stated that certain provisions in our security legislation come in the way of labour organisations, etc. These must also be reviewed. In other words, while we should proceed firmly with every attempt at violence, in regard to other matters we should refrain, as far as possible, from repressive action. Naturally, it is for provincial governments to judge what is absolutely necessary and what is not. In judging, they have to bear in mind the effect on public opinion, as also the fact that continued repression is apt to lose its particular value as a preventive.

The other point I should like to draw your particular attention to is the charge that is made of corruption in government departments, more particularly in regard to civil supplies, licences, etc. Many of these charges are vague and it is difficult to enquire into them. But wherever a specific charge is made, it should be enquired into. The public should be made to feel that every government in India is anxious and eager and alert to put an end to corruption in any shape or form. What usually happens is that a number of small people are proceeded against and convicted, but the big offenders usually get away. It is really the big offenders that count and not the smaller fry.

*From a letter dated 15 August 1949*

I look back to a period of about thirty years ago and subsequently, and try to sense again the spirit that filled the country then. It was a

spirit of confidence in our leader and his mission, in ourselves, and in the future of our country. We had little in the shape of material goods or strength behind us, yet we dared to challenge the might of a proud empire. We succeeded in gaining our independence and today we have far greater strength and, above all, the freedom to work out our destiny. Why then should we be seized by a malaise and uneasiness? Why should we doubt that future which it is up to us to shape according to our will?

We talk about India's lack of many things, of capital goods, of financial resources, etc., and a feeling spreads among many of our people that we must get help from outside sources in order to solve our problems. There is no reason why we should not get this help provided it is on honourable terms which do not infringe in any way on our independence of action. No country can live an isolated existence in the modern world. Yet it is well to remember that the lesson the Father of the Nation taught us was to rely on ourselves and not to look too much to others for help. The strength of a nation comes from within, not from outside. It is by relying on ourselves that we achieve success. The problem before us has many facets, political, economic, social, etc. But perhaps the most important of it is the psychological aspect. If we look to ourselves and have faith in ourselves and in our destiny, all else will follow. If that is lacking, then whatever else comes is of little avail.

Confidence can come in full measure only if we tread a path which we believe to be right. It is this essential belief in the moral rightness of our cause and of the methods that we employed under Gandhiji's guidance, that gave us that strength in the past which brought freedom. So we have to develop afresh or to revive that moral enthusiasm for a great and elemental cause which, when it moves the people, yields magnificent results. Morality, in this context, does not mean the petty morality of the bigot or the puritan seeking to interfere with other

people's lives. It means rather the larger morality of having a great cause to work for and adhering to honourable methods. It means taking a broader view of this great country and of the world and rising above pettiness of communalism, provincialism and faction.

Mahatma Gandhi taught us by infinite repetition the lesson of truth and non-violence. We may argue as to what truth is and we may discuss the philosophy of non-violence and how far it can be applied to our present-day imperfect world. But the essentials of that teaching are clear enough and appear to me to become clearer day by day. Even if we made an earnest attempt to adhere to those essentials, India and the world would be powerfully affected. Whatever the degree to which non-violence can be applied in our external politics, it is certain that it is an inevitable necessity for our internal development. Those people, therefore, who encourage violence in India, in whatever shape or form or with whatever motive, encourage the forces of evil and disruption in this country. Out of that disruption, little good can come.

There is a great deal of talk about what is called left unity and one sees a strange assortment of people trying to cooperate together under the slogan of left unity. Leftism is a vague word which may be interpreted in many ways. Nevertheless, it has a certain significance and a certain constructive policy. Certainly none of us, who have been associated with the great Congress movement in India, is afraid of leftism, if by this word is meant the fullest political and economic democracy and the good of the masses. But leftism in India at the present moment appears to me little beyond opposition to the Congress. Grown out of a spirit of frustration, it is an infantile phenomenon with no positive ideal or policy and is adventurist in outlook. That is unfortunate because it would be a good thing for opposition parties with constructive policies to grow up in India. Without any opposition there is always a tendency towards

complacency and mental and moral deterioration. Unfortunately, however, the type of leftism that we see in India appears to be just a collection of odd elements who dislike the Congress or the government and who are prepared to give up every policy which they are supposed to stand for, in search of others to line up with them.

It may be that the fault lies to some extent at least with the Congress and with the governments in India. As the dominant group both in government and in public life generally. it is for the Congress to win the cooperation of as many people as possible. Some they cannot win over, because there is a fundamental conflict between them, both in regard to policy and methods, but the door should be wide open to others. . . .

The other major lesson that Mahatmaji taught us was ever to look to the masses and always to consider the good of the people as the primary objective to be aimed at. We encourage no class war and we do not wish to injure any group or class. But where interests conflict, it is inevitable that the interests of the common people must prevail. That is not only good morality but also good commonsense. It is the obvious consequence of democracy. Any other policy would lead to major conflicts and disruption.

*From a letter dated 18 January 1950*

This is my last letter to you before the change-over to the Republic takes place. This change is coming about gradually and inevitably. Because of that perhaps, its significance is not sufficiently realized. Nevertheless, it is clear that the coming of the Republic is a very big landmark in our history and the beginning of a new era. It brings fulfilment, on the political side at least, of the dream of vast numbers of Indians for generations past. It is the fulfilment of our pledge. Yet, we all know that we have not yet ended our journey and a very

important part of our pledge still remains to be redeemed. That relates to the economic condition of the people.

Problems of great magnitude surround us and many of us are apt sometimes to grow a little weary or even despondent because of these problems and the slowness of advance towards their solution. In the country there is no flaming enthusiasm, which is so necessary for great deeds and rapid progress. It is difficult to keep the people at a high pitch for a long time. Looking round, however, and taking a dispassionate view of the situation, I am convinced that India is making good, however slowly, and that the future of India is going to be a bright one. It may be that the next two or three years are difficult ones, but the final outcome is certain. I hope, therefore, that on the day when the long-sought Republic of India comes into existence, we shall look to the future with a stout heart and with confidence in ourselves and in our motherland. I hope that we shall try to forget, as far as possible, the conflicts and divisions that have invaded our ranks and the bitterness that sometimes creeps into our work. We must try to start afresh with open minds and open hearts, even for those who happen to differ from us. It was the sovereign method of Gandhiji to attract and convert even the doubters and the quibblers. Even more so we have to look into our own hearts and see where we have erred and what we have left undone. If we function rightly and with integrity of mind, other right results will also follow. . . .

The Akalis in the Punjab have declared that they do not accept this Constitution and they have even decided to boycott any celebration of it.* It is open to them to do so, but it is obvious that

* The Shiromani Akali Dal rejected the Constitution on grounds including the vast powers it vested in the Centre, the limited role it envisaged for the judiciary, the restrictions it placed on personal freedom, and the extraordinary power it gave to the executive during emergency times.

certain consequences will follow. Their policy in the past has been a singularly unstable one, and I have been sorry to notice that they lack vision and perspective completely and approach big national problems from rather a narrow viewpoint. Some others have also declared their condemnation of this Constitution. It is open to anyone to like or dislike the Constitution or any other law. But it is a dangerous procedure for any individual or for any group to range itself in a hostile manner and even go to the extent of boycotting the Constitution as framed. Any person may work peacefully for the change of the Constitution, but we cannot tolerate any insult to it.

*From a letter dated 2 February 1950*

The pageantry and ceremonial are over and we have to settle down now to our humdrum activities and labours. With one difference. Any big change like this compels one to think of what we are aiming at and how we propose to get there—objectives and ends, ideals and policies and methods. There is a tendency to look back and be retrospective, a tendency to look ahead, but above all, to look at the problems which surround us in the present. It is possible to make a fairly lengthy list of our achievements; it is also possible to make an equally lengthy list of our lack of achievements. Perhaps the biggest lack is a psychological one. In spite of occasional bursts of enthusiasm among the people, as on the occasion of the celebration of Republic Day, there is an inertness and passivity and a complete lack of enthusiasm, generally speaking, among the people. On the eve of a new phase in our history, what is most necessary is a flaming enthusiasm for the tasks in hand—faith, confidence, energy and the spirit of concerted effort. Do we find any of these today in India? Certainly in some measure in some people. But, certainly also, a lack of all of them in most people most of the time. Disruptive forces grow

and people's minds are full of doubt as to what they should do and so they turn to criticism of others without doing much themselves. The tone of our public life goes down. We take the name of Gandhi, as we did before and as no doubt we shall continue to do in the future, and yet, I often wonder what he would say if he saw us now and looked at the picture of India.

We work hard and wear ourselves away and that itself gives some satisfaction. If people do not appreciate our labours, we tend to blame them and think that they are unfair to us. Yet the essence of democratic functioning is not merely that we do the right thing but also that we make others appreciate this. A good workman does not blame his tools, even though the tools may not be good. We have to work with the tools we have in human and other materials.

We face big problems, economic and political, and yet, I am convinced that the biggest problem of all is this psychological problem of raising the morale of the people and of turning it to enthusiastic effort. Many people in India lead a poor enough existence and some kind of suffering and unhappiness is their lot. Obviously we cannot put an end to this suddenly as if by magic. There is, perhaps, a certain inevitability about the gradual progress of a nation. That gradualness can be speeded up somewhat, but where a whole nation of hundreds of millions has to be trained up, there is no magic way of doing it. So we should not be dispirited if the pace is sometimes slow, provided that there is a movement and in the right direction. It is true that pace itself counts when evil forces also march, for if we do not move fast enough, that evil overtakes us and might overwhelm us.

Is our direction right, what are our objectives, and is our pace adequate? These questions no doubt occur to you, as they occur to me. We live in a world blinded by fear and hatred and the spirit of violence. And even though we talk of Gandhi and non-violence, our own eyes are shrouded often enough and there is enough of

violence and fear and hatred round about us. What a legacy we have inherited! . . .

What then are we to do? First of all, we must never permit ourselves to become static in our minds and smug in our approach. There is no greater danger than that. We have to keep in tune with the masses of our people and try to win their confidence. We can only do so if we work to that end and produce some results. As I think I have told you before, we have not merely to work for the masses but work with them. We want the co-operation of all classes, and yet, in the final analysis, we must give first place to the masses of our people.

If we drew up a balance-sheet of our work during the past two years, I think we can legitimately say that in the international field, India has made great progress and has found a definite place for herself. We can say that the integration of the states in India has been a remarkable achievement. In regard to other domestic activities, I think we have made good in the improvement of transport. We have lately made marked progress on the food front. Some of the provinces have gone ahead with their zamindari legislation which is so important. Perhaps we might also say that the mere fact that we have carried on more or less with success, in spite of the perils and dangers that surrounded us, is no mean achievement. That is the credit side. The debit side is also formidable.

*From a letter dated 16 February 1950*

I am disturbed and distressed by the repeated firings that take place in various parts of India, sometimes inside prison and sometimes outside. I am not referring to what has been happening in Calcutta, because a serious situation arose there and it had to be controlled by all the means at our disposal in order to avoid any spreading of it. Elsewhere, many of these conflicts have been due to the set policy of

the Communists to create trouble by all means at their disposal. That challenge has to be met, wherever it is made. In meeting it, however, we have to take care that we do not play into the hands of those very Communists who want to discredit our Governments. Apart from the Communists, other cases have occurred of firing on the public. I can well believe that there was sufficient justification for these. Yet the fact remains that this kind of thing is creating a bad reputation for us and making our police force unpopular with the public. It would be a tragedy if the old feeling against the police was revived in the public. I should like you to give thought to this matter because I fear it is a growing danger. Perhaps you might consult your colleagues as well as your principal officers as to how best to deal with this situation. Law and order have to be maintained. But at the same time public opinion has to be satisfied and kept in harmony with Government. One suggestion I would like to make to you, and indeed I have made it previously, is that in every major case of firing there should be a proper enquiry other than a departmental enquiry. That is a demand which is always made on behalf of the public and we have ourselves made it frequently in the past. It would be worthwhile to develop a convention to this effect, because then it will not mean selecting particular cases for an enquiry.

*From a letter dated 1 February 1951*

The U.P. Legislature, after prolonged labour, passed their Zamindari Abolition Bill. This was assented to by the President, as a reference had been made to him by the Governor. As soon as this was done, large numbers of zamindars applied for and got injunctions from the High Court to stop any implementation of this legislation. This raises very important points. Parliament, representing the will of the people, decides on certain essential social reforms. These are

then, by a process of interpretation of the Constitution, held up by the judiciary. The result may well be trouble in the rural areas of the States concerned. It is the right of the judiciary to interpret the Constitution and to apply it and none of us can or should challenge that. But if the Constitution itself comes in our way, then surely it is time to change that Constitution to that extent. It is impossible to hang up urgent social changes because the Constitution comes in the way, according to the interpretation of courts. This has happened in Bihar also. We shall have to find a remedy, even though this might involve a change in the Constitution.*

*From a letter dated 21 March 1951*

A recent decision of the Patna High Court about zamindari abolition has raised rather vital issues for all of us.† It is well-known that the abolition of the zamindari system has been a principal plank in the Congress programme for many years. Indeed it may well be said that radical agrarian reform is the basic problem of Asia. If this is to be prevented, then our entire social and economic policy fails and the hundreds of millions of peasants and agriculturists can well charge us with a grave breach of promise. An intolerable situation would be created. At the same time, it is obvious that the interpretation of the Constitution is a function of our superior courts. We have to respect the decisions of the courts, for not to do so is to strike at the very root of our constitutional structure. The executive and the judiciary have to

* The Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, passed in June 1951 removed the zamindari acts from the purview of the courts.

† On 12 March 1951, the Patna High Court held the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, as unconstitutional on the grounds that it transgressed Article 14 of the Constitution which laid down that 'the State shall not deny to any person equality before the laws or the equal protection of the law within the territory of India'.

pull together, even though they function separately and independently. While our courts have the right to interpret the Constitution and we must respect and honour their decisions, the fact remains that the wider social policy of the country must be determined by Parliament or the State Legislature. Any other course would be a denial of democracy and a failure on the part of Government to perform its most important function. The Government is no longer an agency for the mere carrying on of routine functions. It has to lay down social policies and give effect to them. Therefore, it has become necessary for us to consider an amendment of the Constitution, so as to remove the lacunae which have apparently crept into it. . . .

[I]n India we are, relatively speaking, a stable and well-organized government. Our critics are many and their criticisms may often be justified, but the fact remains that we are functioning with a considerable measure of success by whatever comparative standards we can judge this. And yet the fact remains that in many ways the situation is explosive and I am distressed at the general lack of realization of this. We talk complacently of elections, we discuss at inordinate length secondary matters in our Assemblies and Parliament, we pride ourselves on our democratic procedure, forgetting that all this is based on certain assumptions. If those assumptions go, then democracy also goes and all its paraphernalia tumbles down. The world today is in the grip of a tremendous problem. There are political problems and even more so economic and social, and behind it all, are psychological conflicts of great magnitude. The spirit of man is in travail. It may be said that dark forces try to overwhelm the world and, consciously or unconsciously, we are striving for survival, wherever we might be. The barriers that to some extent hold these dark forces in any country are not so solid as people imagine. If those barriers go, as they well might, then it will be a bad day for the world or for any country.

We in India equally face this struggle for survival. I am not exaggerating and I am not, by any means, pessimistic. I believe I have faith in India's future, but I cannot ignore the numerous disruptive and fissiparous tendencies that I see around me, the strange lack of awareness of people and their occupation in trivial matters, forgetting the things that count. Our democracy is a tender plant which has to be nourished with wisdom and care and which requires a great deal of understanding of its real processes and its discipline. It is not just some structure which a Constitution builds up. That structure is lifeless by itself. We have to give it life and purpose. That life must be the spirit and discipline that animates us; that purpose must be a well-recognized social purpose to the realization of which we bend our efforts and our energy.

*From a letter dated 2 May 1951*

Parliament is continuing one of its longest sessions. It will probably continue its work till almost the end of this month. We have to get through some very important measures. . . .

[A] very important measure is one to amend the Constitution.* In the course of this amendment we shall endeavour to get some lacunae filled. But the main purpose of the amendment is twofold: one to remove certain difficulties owing to judicial interpretation of fundamental rights; some recent decisions by inferior courts have carried this interpretation to extraordinary lengths. The other part of the Constitution, which needs urgent amendment, relates to social measures relating to land which various States Assemblies have passed and which have been held up by judicial decisions.

* The states were to be enabled through amendments of Article 19 and 31 to place restrictions on the freedom of speech in the interest of public order and remove obstacles in the implementation of the zamindari abolition acts.

Agrarian reform is by and large the most vital and urgent of our problems. The National Congress has been interested in this for the last twenty years or more. There can be no doubt that present conditions cannot continue and the proposed reforms are long overdue. It has therefore become essential to widen the scope somewhat of the Constitution in regard to such agrarian reforms.

*From a letter dated 2 June 1951*

The press of India has been full of the Constitution Amendment Bill during the last fortnight. In Parliament, all of us have been heavily worked and the strain, after a long session, has been great. As I write to you, the Constitution Amendment Bill is in its last stages. . . .

[The amendment to Article 19] has been the cause of the greatest argument and the fiercest controversy.* This Article, as you know, deals with freedom of speech and expression. We have been accused of curbing and throttling the press and of trying to behave in an autocratic manner in regard to it. We have met that challenge and, I think, proved to all reasonable satisfaction that there is no such intention or attempt. Nevertheless, the press campaign against these amendments has gone on and some foreign papers have eagerly taken advantage of this to condemn us. . . .

I can understand a certain apprehension in the minds of the press and I can appreciate their fighting for their rights, even though those rights have not really been threatened in the least. But I confess that I have been surprised at the vehemence of this opposition. . . .

* Clause 2 of Article 19 was amended by the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, to introduce a new ground for the restriction on freedom of speech and expression. But in view of the fears expressed by the Opposition in Parliament, the amendment was qualified by the addition of the words 'reasonable' restrictions to govern all the grounds mentioned in the amendment.

I am glad that there has been this great argument about it in the press and in the country. Such public debates waken up people and force them to think, even though the direction of the thought might not always be the right one. Nothing is worse in a democracy than complacency on the part of a Government or of the people. Unfortunately there is that tendency to complacency and passivity, except in the use of strong language. Our Congress politics also tend to be rather unreal. There is a great deal of talk of secession and of prominent persons resigning from the Congress, and yet there is really little public argument on any issue. One would have thought that when such major issues were before the country, there would be fierce debate in the All India Congress Committee such as there used to be in the old days. But the A.I.C.C. meets in a humdrum way and does routine work, and hardly any mention is made in the course of its proceedings of what is really ailing the Congress and the country. There appears to be something wrong about this development. Our politics progressively become of the parlour variety. I hope we shall pull ourselves out of this groove which must be harmful for any healthy development.

Coming back to the amendments of the Constitution, these cast a heavy burden upon us. We must not imagine that we can now use all the old acts which, for the moment, had been put out of commission by some judicial pronouncements. We have given many assurances to Parliament and the country about this matter. All the old acts, those applying to the press especially, should be kept, as far as possible, at arm's length. The law of sedition, as such and as applied in the old days, should have no place in our statute book. But what must continue to have a place and be acted upon is the law dealing with the spread of racial and communal hatred. About this, we have to be careful and not prevent the atmosphere to be vitiated more than it already is. . . .

A grave danger today is the growth of innumerable petty news sheets in various languages, which are often of an exceedingly low standard and indulge in depths of vulgarity. This has little to do with politics although it is often used for political purposes. I have made it clear in Parliament that we shall not come in the way of even the severest political criticism, either of our internal or external policy. I have also said that we do not wish to come in the way of the criticism of the policies of foreign countries, subject only to discouraging anything which might lead to a serious situation between us and another country or might even tend towards war. There is at present no law concerning criticism of foreign countries except an out-of-date statute which has no application today. It is not our intention to make any law affecting foreign countries.

In the course of the debate in Parliament, a great deal was said in favour of allowing Parliament only to make laws in terms of the new amendments. There was a certain distrust and suspicion of the State Governments and Legislatures, not all, of course, but some. There was also the argument that such laws should be uniform throughout India. There was something in these arguments because of the great diversity in the States. As the new Bill is being passed, the authority remains with the States. But as the subjects are concurrent, it is inevitable that any laws made should come up to the Centre for scrutiny and for the avoidance of any conflict between two different pieces of legislation.

I would therefore suggest to you to be careful in taking any action as a result of these amendments without reference to us. In particular, any interference with the freedom of the press has to be avoided, except in cases of extreme vulgarity and defamation. In such cases, it is desirable to have recourse to the criminal law. It is not proper to allow false charges to remain unanswered.

Much was said about pre-censorship. This is rightly objected to and I think it should not be indulged in under any circumstances.

With the passing of this amending legislation, a number of zamindari and land acts have been validated. This is a great gain, for now it will be possible for the States concerned to go ahead with the abolition of the zamindari system and other land reforms. It must be remembered that this present first stage of legislation chiefly concerns itself with the abolition of the zamindari system and of large estates. It is not meant to apply to the relatively small ryot or to the *ryotwari* system as such. In the Punjab, peasant proprietors are called zamindars. This new act does not apply to them as such or to their like elsewhere. But it is clear that in any scheme of land reform, we have to aim at something more than mere abolition of big zamindaris. Already in some States a maximum figure for a holding for a peasant proprietor has been laid down. This may be 50 acres or less. Land reform will not only go in this direction but should also aim at co-operative farming, without which there is little hope of efficient and profitable farming and greater food production. For the present, however, we must concentrate on the immediate issue and that is the abolition of the *jagirdari* and zamindari systems and their like.

In some States, the validation by this act of some legislation, which had been declared *ultra vires* by the local High Courts, might well produce a somewhat complicated situation. Some acts might have been done during this interval, after their declaration as *ultra vires*. What then are we to do about them now? I suggest that all these matters should be carefully examined and no sudden and upsetting step taken. I suggest also that the new zamindari abolition acts should be scrutinized to find out what, if any, injustice is done in individual cases. In comprehensive pieces of legislation, it is inevitable that some cases of individual injustice should arise. We cannot help that,

but where we can remove this injustice, either by executive action or even by a small amending bill, this might be considered. We shall gladly help you in this so far as we can. We want to avoid continuous litigation. Of course, this is not in our power completely and it is quite likely that even the amending act might be challenged in some way in the courts. If so, we shall meet the challenge. We cannot possibly allow our great social schemes to be held up.

*From a letter dated 15 June 1951*

It was, I think, right that Members of Parliament and the press should be vigilant on an occasion when any of the liberties guaranteed to us by the Constitution were supposed to be in some danger. Nevertheless, I was surprised at the nature and vehemence of the attacks made which appeared to be based not so much on the wording of the Bill but rather on some fancied extension of it. The Bill was primarily intended to remove barriers to our legislation for the abolition of the zamindari system. Both from the political and the social points of view, it had become a matter of urgency and high importance that speedy effect should be given to our major policies of land reform. It was an old pledge, oft-repeated; it was also something that had become essential in the context of events. The amendment to Article 19 was, of course, an enabling one and phrased in somewhat wide language. But this was restricted by the word 'reasonable' and thus made justiciable. Certain rather far-fetched interpretations of the Constitution by the law courts had placed grave difficulties in our way and it became necessary, therefore, to make the position clear. In doing so, there was no intention on our part to curb the freedom of the press in so far as the expression of any opinion or any opposition was concerned. But, it was true that there had been an increasing tendency in the irresponsible sections

of the press to indulge in extreme vulgarity and defamatory writing. Politically, this might have little significance but from the point of any cultural standards, this was most distressing. It is perfectly true that standards cannot be raised by repressive legislation and that other methods have to be used for this purpose. But we live in a precarious and dangerous age and it seemed to us that the safety of the State might perhaps require that Parliament should have the power to deal with any serious situation that might arise.

We had to have a written Constitution. That was inevitable in the circumstances, and because we had a written Constitution, we had to have fundamental rights incorporated in it. Nevertheless, a rigid Constitution may well come in the way of change in a transitional age. A Constitution must be held in respect, but if it ceases to represent or comes in the way of the spirit of the age or the powerful urges of the people, then difficulties and conflicts arise. It is wise therefore to have not only stability and fixity of purpose, but also a certain flexibility and pliability in a Constitution.

It was not, and is not, our intention to curb the freedom of the press and we do not want State Governments to take advantage of the new amendment in applying some obsolete law. Indeed, one of the first steps that we have to take now is to put an end to some of these obsolete laws, to which reference was frequently made in the course of the debate. None of us wants, for instance, the old sedition law to continue on the statute book. That has a bad history and evokes unpleasant memories. Positively, we shall have to consider what laws to enact which, while ensuring full freedom of expression of the press, should help in keeping up standards and preventing the abuse of that freedom.

In regard to the zamindari legislation, we have to go ahead now as speedily as possible. Even so, it is desirable to take every step after full consideration and with as large a measure of cooperation as possible.

We cannot, of course, permit any lack of co-operation by a section of the people to stop us from going ahead in this respect. But it will probably make for speed if we consider criticisms and, where they are valid, meet them, either by executive action or even, if necessary, by some amending legislation.

*From a letter dated 22 September 1951*

I would like to draw your special attention to the Home Ministry letter . . . regarding tours of Ministers in connection with the election campaign. I have no doubt that these views, which are based on sound political convention, are fully acceptable to your colleagues and yourself and that you will so regulate your tour arrangements as to avoid any criticism that Ministers are misusing their official position for Party advantage during the elections.

The Home Ministry letter does not refer to the question of travelling allowances of Ministers for journeys which have, for their main purpose, the election campaign. For such journeys, I am sure you will agree that no travelling expenses or daily allowances should be charged by Ministers. This view is, on the face of it, a fair and sensible one; it is also the view, which, on technical grounds of the interpretation of Constitution, the Comptroller and Auditor-General has also reached.

The general principles mentioned in the Home Ministry letter should be applied from now onwards. It should be easy to separate purely election meetings from meetings meant for explaining governmental policies and the like. Nevertheless, this may not be possible during the lengthy period of time and the two might overlap. Generally speaking, public meetings should be sponsored non-officially, although Government officials may give some assistance for reasons of security and order.

*From a letter dated 4 October 1951*

Ever since we came into office, and indeed long before that, our major plank was the abolition of the zamindari system. There was not much delay on our part and many State Governments, soon after assuming office, undertook this legislation. The subject was complicated and various committees investigated it. The question of compensation became a major stumbling block. Various States dealt with it in various ways. Ultimately, some States passed these zamindari abolition laws, but the courts then came into the picture and issued injunctions and the like. As you know, this was one of the major reasons for our amending our Constitution. . . .

It has often been said that agrarian reform is the most important question in Asia today. We realized that long ago and even took steps to that end. But the Constitution and rules we have framed have made it difficult for us to increase the pace of progress.

The Hindu Code Bill has been pending for four or five years, apart from the long investigations that preceded this. It has come up for debate repeatedly before Parliament and interminable speeches have been delivered. It was obviously a controversial measure and it was not our desire to suppress debate or even to, treat this as a strictly Party measure necessitating a whip. The result has been that after every effort, we have failed thus far to get even a part of it through. In our attempt to get something done during this session, we decided to take up Part II of the Bill only, that is marriage and divorce. Even that has been hung up and, with the utmost reluctance, we have had to postpone its consideration, because there simply was no time for it during this session. I have no doubt that a considerable majority in Parliament desired the passage of this Bill with minor alterations. But that majority was helpless before a determined minority and we had to confess defeat for the moment at least.

I do not think, however, that all this time on the Hindu Code Bill has been wasted. It has kept this important subject before the public and made people think about it. It had made it one of the major issues in India and I have little doubt that it will have to be taken up and passed sometime or other. For my part, I am convinced that progress in India must be on all fronts—political, economic and social. Unless this happens, we shall get held up. Some people think that we should keep the social aspect apart and concentrate on the political and economic. There can be no such division. Our social organization has shown both virtues and vices in the past. It has displayed an amazing cohesion and continuity. It has also progressively weakened the political and economic set-up, apart from other consequences in the social domain. Whatever its virtues might have been in the past, it is clear that major changes are required in the present. The Hindu Code Bill represents an attempt to bring about some changes without shaking up too much the social organization. The Bill, as drafted, was not perfect and no doubt could be changed. But the essential principles underlying it were important and could not be given up. The struggle to achieve these changes will have to continue.

As I write this letter, the Press Bill is being hotly argued in Parliament. There has been a fierce attack upon it in the press and much misrepresentation has been indulged in. It is stated that the Prime Minister and the Home Minister have broken the assurances they gave. This is completely untrue. Many of us, and I am of that number, are most reluctant to pass legislation limiting the freedom of the press or of expression. But it seems clear to me, and indeed it is generally recognized, that something should be done to clarify the present position in regard to the press. This present position is chaotic. It is also generally admitted that some sections of the press are being used for purposes which are most injurious from various points of view. They preach rank communalism and inflame people's minds

and passions. Their moral standards are terribly low and often the purpose of some of these disreputable journals is just pure blackmail. Something has to be done about this.

The chief objection to the press laws in the past was that they armed the executive with excessive powers and that executive was an irresponsible one then. Today the executives are popular and responsible; even so, the Press Bill does not give the executive any final power to take action. The decision has to be by judicial process. This itself is a tremendous change from the old press laws. The question in debate, therefore, should be a very limited one as to how far we should go in defining what should not be done. I think you will find that these definitions have been strictly limited and it is not fair to say that the Government wants to interfere with the freedom of the press or with any kind of legitimate criticism. There is always a risk of a wrong step being taken, however good the law. There is also a more obvious risk of our public life being poisoned by a certain section of depraved journalism. Anyone can bring out a newspaper; any monied person can use the press for his own personal advantage. . . .

Having said this, I should also like to say that when we try to control the press, we enter upon dangerous ground and great care has to be taken to misuse any power that might be given.

*From a letter dated 15 April 1952*

In the fortnightly letter that I am sending you today I have referred to the question of the detenus. I should like to say something more about this, because action should be taken as soon as possible.

When I was in Calcutta last month, I received a deputation urging upon me the release of all detenus. This deputation consisted of one Communist Party member and representatives of a number of other organizations and also some fairly well-known individuals. There is

no doubt that there is a great deal of feeling among normal liberal circles against indefinite detention of persons. That is a feeling which we have ourselves nurtured in the past and is understandable.

I pointed out to this deputation that the Detention Act had not been used merely for Communists, but also for back-marketeers, foreign spies, and, as in Saurashtra, some members of the princely and *jagirdari* order. I asked them if they would like us to release these people. They said emphatically no. . . .

Then I told them that so far as the Communists and the like were concerned, our policy was based on two considerations: (1) That no one should be detained for holding or expressing any opinion peacefully. It is only when violence was advocated or indulged in that we wished to take action. (2) That in the changed circumstances of today, we were of opinion that we should review the whole position with a view to releasing as large a number of detenus as possible. . . .

Nevertheless, it is true that, owing to recent developments, the present policy of the Communist Party in India has undergone a change for the time being at least. On the whole, it might be said that there is at present no violence. There has been practically none for many months. . . .

In some places I have found that people have been detained for two or three years or even more. Broadly speaking, this does seem to me to be wrong. Probably, if they had been convicted for the kind of offence charged, their sentence might have run out. We can hardly justify this long continued detention for something that happened or was likely to happen two or three years ago. Conditions have changed. There are some kind of revising authorities, normally consisting of a high court judge. That revising authority can only consider the facts or the data placed before it at the time of the original detention. It can hardly take into consideration subsequent happenings because, in relation to that individual, nothing much could have happened

since his detention. It does not help, therefore, to put these same old facts before that revising authority. If the matter has to be considered afresh, this must be done in view of the new situation that has arisen and only the Government can consider that.

The result of this line of thought is that it is no longer desirable or advantageous from any point of view to keep persons in detention, except in very special and obvious cases. Generally speaking, this continuation of detention serves the very cause for which the persons detained stand for. The risk involved in releasing them is less than the other risks involved in keeping them. Therefore, it is desirable to take early steps to release them.

Your Government has to shoulder the responsibility of law and order and therefore it is for you to consider this matter thoroughly. We do not wish to force your hands in any way. But it is our considered opinion that the time has come to review this whole matter most liberally. If we do so now, it would be easier for us to take any action later, if that becomes necessary. If, on the other hand, we continue the present detentions, then we have to face a continuous agitation and outcry and public opinion grows against us. I have no doubt that in the State Assemblies, as well as in the Central Parliament, these questions will be brought up repeatedly and instead of submitting to pressure then, it is better for us to take action previously.

There is also the question of banning the Communist Party. Our courts have already declared against this. It is desirable, therefore, to remove these bans before we are compelled to do so by some decision of the local high court.

*From a letter dated 18 May 1952*

Since I wrote to you last, the new Government has come into existence. . . .

Thus we begin a new chapter in our history and face anew great responsibilities. The governance of any country in the world today is no easy matter; the governance of a great and varied country like India is perhaps as hard a task as any in the world today. Any person who is associated with this governance must approach this great task with humility as well as with a measure of faith. Whether we are small men or big, we are engaged in great undertakings affecting the life and future of vast numbers of human beings. No man can say with certainty that success will come to him, but every man can determine to do his utmost to achieve success. We can measure success or failure by certain physical standards and statistical methods. But those standards and methods ignore certain immaterial and immeasurable things, which ultimately count far more than anything else. Success means raising the material, the cultural, the moral and the spiritual level of the people. A feeling of success ultimately is itself a test of achievement. The governance of a country does not merely consist in issuing orders from some high office, but rather in reaching the minds and hearts of masses of people, of bringing about satisfactory human relations. Ultimately almost every problem can be resolved into one of human relations—the relationship of one individual with another, of an individual with a group and of one group with another group. The group may become a national group and then we have international relations. We have to deal with human beings and humanity and we can only deal with them if we always keep in view the human aspect of every problem. We are apt to forget this, living in our ivory tower of government offices and dealing impersonally with files and papers, but behind those files and papers and the problems discussed in them, lie human beings. . . .

The new Government has been formed and there is now the normal complement of Ministers in charge of portfolios. Thus far I have not added to the Ministers of State or Deputy Ministers. But

it is my intention to do so because I think the enormous quantity of work requires it, and also because I think it is an essential part of the democratic system of government to have these stages of training in the practice of government. A Republic, or any democratic government, does not depend upon an individual or a few individuals. If it is to succeed it must have a large number of trained people, so that if any go out or fade away, as they must from time to time, others can take their place with credit.

This applies to State Governments as much as to the Centre. I have noticed however with regret that appointments of Deputy Ministers and the like are often governed by extraneous factors, of satisfying this group or that individual, and not on merit. Such factors have to be taken into consideration and cannot be ignored in democracy but they should only be secondary considerations. If merit suffers and the people having that merit are not given the opportunity to utilize it, then standards go down and the country goes down with them. . . .

In our army, and in most other senior appointments, the rule appears to be that a person should be appointed if he is senior and fit. Fitness is a somewhat negative quality, that is, it means that there is nothing to show unfitness. It may be that some one slightly junior is far better on the ground of merit. But seniority prevails as a rule. I have pointed out repeatedly to our army people and to others that while we should honour seniority, merit must be the most important criterion in every high appointment. It is a curious fact that in recent major wars nearly all the senior Generals had to be discarded and new and much younger ones took their place in the early stage of the war. Peace-time promotions did not justify themselves in the crisis of war.

In the appointment of Governors, there are two general rules which we have observed, apart from merit, of course. One is that the appointment of a person from the same province should be avoided,

the other is that a Governor should not have more than one full term of office as such. I think both these rules as salutary and should be made into firm conventions. . . .

We have now had experience of our Governors functioning for a number of years. Some people think that a Governor is just a formal and rather decorative Head of the State without any important functions, except perhaps social ones. This is not correct either from the constitutional or other points of view. The Governor is, of course, the constitutional head and he should not and cannot override or interfere with the decisions of his Cabinet who are responsible to the State Legislature. But even without interference, he has a good many functions to perform. He should be kept in full touch with the administration and should see all the important papers which ministers consider. He should give his advice in regard to any matter whenever he considers this necessary. It is open to his ministers to accept or not to accept that advice. But it is his bounden duty to give advice, formally or informally, and for his ministers to consider it. A Governor also must keep in touch with the people. He should be not only a social head of the State but also a person who comes into intimate touch with all classes. He should tour about, more specially in the rural areas and in places which are likely to be neglected. He should exercise his influence in removing friction between groups or individuals in Government or Assembly. He should in particular pay attention to the backward classes, tribal people, etc. Any governmental action in regard to these people must necessarily be taken by the Government, but a Governor can bring a personal and human touch into this business and thus make these unfortunate and somewhat disinherited people feel that they also have an honoured place in our India of today. I have appreciated greatly the tours of some of our Governors among the tribal people, who normally live an isolated and neglected life, and who deserve so much help and sympathy from us.

I have noticed with some distress the recent procedure adopted by some members of Assemblies in walking out when the Governor or the Rajpramukh came to deliver his address to the Assembly. The worst instance of this kind occurred in Madras where a leading member of the Opposition actually interrupted the Governor, stood up and made a statement and then walked out with his colleagues. This was not merely a personal affront to the Governor as an individual but I think that it was an affront to our Constitution. The Governor goes to the Assembly and functions otherwise as Head of the State. He is a symbol of the State and it is not a question of a person liking him or disliking him. . . . Let us have as much argument and even political conflict as we like, provided of course that it is carried on with decency. But to challenge the basis of the State and the Constitution is another matter. . . .

You will have noticed that we have decided to give up honorific appellations like 'Honourable', 'His Excellency', etc. Our President, the highest in the State, had no such title or prefix attached to him and there was no particular reason why others should, except the vanity of human beings. It is a good thing therefore that we have given this up.

I have been meeting our new Members of Parliament. There are over 700 of them as between the two Houses. I have noticed with great regret how few women have been elected. I suppose this is so in the State Assemblies and Councils also. I think we are very much to be blamed. It is not a matter of showing favour to anyone or even of injustice, but rather of doing something which is not conducive to the future growth of our country. I am quite sure that our real and basic growth will only come when women have a full chance to play their part in public life. Wherever they have had this chance, they have, as a whole, done well, better if I may say so, than the average man. Our laws are man made, our society dominated by man, and

so most of us naturally take a very lopsided view of this matter. We cannot be objective, because we have grown up in certain grooves of thought and action. But the future of India will probably depend ultimately more upon the women than the men.

*From a letter dated 16 June 1952*

On the return of our cultural mission to China, Delhi heard a great deal about the new China from the members of this mission. On the whole, what we heard was highly appreciative of China, though there were criticisms also. In regard to one matter there was complete agreement and that was the new spirit and enthusiasm of the Chinese people. For any people that is a great asset. For the Chinese, with their amazing capacity for hard work and co-operative endeavour, that means something even more. Although we have heard a great deal about recent developments in China, our knowledge still remains vague and the picture is not clear. It would be helpful if we knew more about the background of events there, of their economy, their engineering success, their education, etc., because we might be able to learn something from all this. China started a period of civil wars and internal conflicts forty years ago. During these years, she had no real peace and she had major wars. Because of this obviously no development could take place and large parts of the country were devastated. When the new Government came into power, they had to deal with this accumulated ruin of forty years of conflict and had to start almost from scratch. Only in Manchuria there was a highly industrialized area, built up by the Japanese. But even there part of the equipment had been removed after the last war, mostly by the Russians. Thus the new regime in China started with every disadvantage except that of faith and enthusiasm. Immediately after there was friction with other countries and they were unable to get

any kind of help from any outside country excepting the U.S.S.R. What they have done in these difficult conditions is, therefore, of great interest to us. It is true that authoritarian methods yield results rather quickly, whatever their immediate or long-distance disadvantages might be. Nevertheless, it is a feat to face these manifold difficulties and overcome them, chiefly with their own efforts.

We cannot compare India to the European countries or the American. These latter countries have had a long period of growth and industralization and they have much smaller populations. Even a comparison with the Soviet Union is not fair because the Soviet Union has had over thirty years of building up. Also the Soviet Union has vast areas and, compared to India, a smaller population. But there are far more points of similarity between India and China, among them being enormous populations and economic backwardness. How the Chinese overcome these economic conditions, industrialize their country and produce more wealth and distribute it more evenly, is therefore of great interest to us. We are committed, and I think rightly so, to democratic and parliamentary institutions. That does not necessarily mean that democracy must be rigid and unable to adapt itself to changing conditions. Democracy, apart from its institutions, is a way of Government and life itself. I firmly believe that it is a better way than a dictatorship or authoritarianism. In the long run, dictatorships must, I think, rather stunt the growth of the country. There are initial advantages which are obvious and the outward speed of progress appears to be fast. But it is very doubtful if the essential quality which underlies human progress, that is the creative spirit of man, can develop adequately under an authoritarian system. To some extent, of course, such authoritarian systems as have economic equality as their goal are initially liberating forces and release tremendous popular energy. That is a great advantage. But if dictatorship continues, the creative spirit may gradually fade away.

Democracy is supposed to nurture this creative spirit but if it cannot bring about a release from poverty of large masses of human beings, then that creative spirit can only function in a few. Poverty is after all more restrictive and limiting than anything else. If poverty and low standards continue then democracy, for all its fine institutions and ideals, ceases to be a liberating force. It must therefore aim continuously at the eradication of poverty and its companion unemployment. In other words, political democracy is not enough. It must develop into economic democracy also. The problem before India is to bring about this development as rapidly as possible. In the ultimate analysis, the world will not be governed by theories but by actual results achieved. If India succeeds in achieving these results under a system of political democracy, that indeed would be a great victory not only for India but for democracy. If China succeeds by her own methods, undoubtedly those methods will then attract large numbers of people.

Some countries of the West, notably the United Kingdom, tried their utmost since the war to develop this economic democracy under the parliamentary system. They tried to find a middle path between unrestrained private enterprise and the old capitalism and the socialistic order. I think that the progress made by England, in spite of enormous difficulties, was remarkable and does every credit to her government and people. It is said that in developing her social schemes, she lived beyond her means and is now suffering because of this. This may partly be true, but I am sure that if she had not done so, her fate would have been worse. She had to bring about a tremendous transformation from the days of the old empire when tribute in various forms flowed to her from all over the world, to her new condition which was very different, in spite of some relics of the empire still continuing. Her Government decided to spend their money and energy on improving the lot of the people generally,

and putting an end to employment, in greater production, etc. They succeeded in a large measure. Perhaps the effort was a bit too great, but it must be remembered that, in addition to all this, England had to spend large sums of money on armaments. Whether this was justified or not, it is not for me to say. It is this additional burden of armaments that hastened the grave crisis that she has to face today. Even so, England is today a far more stable and disciplined and in a way contented country than almost any in Europe. Parliamentary democracy has justified itself there more than elsewhere. It may be that the burden is too great for her to bear. But I feel that she has still great resources of strength in her and a great capacity to adapt herself.

When we consider the problems of India, we have to keep these changing, dynamic, fascinating and sometimes rather terrifying aspects of the modern world before us and try to learn from them and avoid the pitfalls. We may discuss various policies but whatever policy we may adopt, our choice is ultimately limited by our capacity in the present. That capacity will no doubt grow. That takes time and there can be no magic solution of our problems. The main thing is that we have the right objective, that we go in that direction, and that we go as fast as circumstances permit us. We can, to some extent, measure and weigh these circumstances but there are ever so many uncertain factors in them, both national and international. The biggest uncertain factor is the response of our own people to any particular policy. It is not ultimately money that counts but the labour, enthusiasm and will of the people.

*From a letter dated 25 July 1952*

The Preventive Detention Bill has gone into Select Committee and it will, no doubt, take up a good deal of our time later. . . . The real point at issue in this Bill is not an individual case here and there, but

whether this power should be given to our Governments. You know that every State Government has demanded this power and if the Central Government did not provide it, there would probably be varying State laws on the same subject. That would be unfortunate. It is far better to have a carefully thought out piece of Central legislation which would bring about uniformity in all the States.

Apart from this major reason, there is, I think, adequate justification for our having this measure to deal with special cases of anti-social activities. Not many people know that quite a considerable number of black-marketeers have been dealt with under the last Act. There have also been cases of espionage and there have been cases, as in Saurashtra, of a well organized movement, comprising big jagirdars in close alliance with gangs of dacoits. But for the Preventive Act that we have, it would have been very difficult to deal with them.

It is supposed by some people that this will be meant chiefly for the Communists. That is not true, though it has been applied a great deal, more especially in Hyderabad and Bengal, against Communists. In Hyderabad, there was something in the nature of open insurrection and I doubt very much if any Government anywhere would have dealt with such insurrectionary activities under the normal civil law. The situation was a very grave one and the gravity can well be realized when we compare it with what has been happening in Malaya. I have no doubt that the Malayan situation is a bigger one and more difficult to handle. Nevertheless, essentially, the two had a great similarity. The special laws and regulations applied in Malaya, without much success thus far, are infinitely harsher than anything that was done in Hyderabad. I think it is true that there were police excesses in Hyderabad and I am distressed about them. But one must remember the terrible excesses on the other side and the difficulties that the police had to experience.

We talk of Communists rather vaguely. There are, of course, the orthodox Communists, i.e., members of the Communist Party of India. But, apart from them, there are many other types and varieties of Communists who are a law unto themselves. Many of these latter still continue to declare that they will indulge in violence. In Bengal, every member of the Communist Party has been released. But there are some of this other type of Communists who still continue in detention because even in detention they say that when they come out they will revert to their peculiar type of violence, which has been throwing bombs, killing people and looting.

The question before us is whether, having regard to all the circumstances, we should have some such preventive detention law or not. I think that it is necessary. The other question then has to be carefully considered as to what the nature of that law should be and how we can profit by our past experience; we should provide checks and safeguards. Some attempt has been made on the present Bill, which is certainly an improvement on the past. It may be still improved further in the Select Committee.

Having said all this, I should like to impress upon you that a law like this must be used with the greatest caution. It is not to be used normally and only in special cases should it be invoked. It is easy enough to put a person in prison and this might well become a habit with some of our district or other officials. We must prevent this happening. I have seen some cases in which it appeared to me to be manifestly wrong to have used this law against some individuals.

*From a letter dated 9 October 1954*

[W]e have been considering various proposals for amending the Constitution made by the State Governments and by our

Ministries here. One of them is the amendment of Article 31* and the connected Articles 31A and 31B,† which has become an urgent problem because of the manner in which the Supreme Court has interpreted Article 31 . . .

In these decisions, the Supreme Court has given a very wide meaning to the expression 'taking possession of or acquiring property' occurring in clause (2) of Article 31 and regarded it as exactly the same as the 'deprivation' referred to in clause (1) of that Article. It holds that if State action withheld any property from the possession and enjoyment of the owner or materially reduced its value, the abridgement of the owner's rights would amount to deprivation, and in every such case the law must provide for compensation to the owner. The Court has also given a very wide meaning to the expression 'property' so as to include contractual rights. In consequence, the curtailment of every property right will have to be compensated under the law. The Court has further held that the principles for determining compensation as laid down by the legislature must ensure a just equivalent of what the owner has been deprived of, and that the question whether those principles take into account all the elements which make up the true value of the property is a justiciable issue.

When clauses (1) and (2) of Article 31 were being considered and passed by the Constituent Assembly, we certainly did not think that they would be interpreted in this manner by the courts. However that may be, this very liberal construction of the Article creates serious difficulties in the way of our putting through social welfare legislation on the lines we have in mind. The following items appear to be specially important from this point of view.

* Article 31 guaranteed the individual's right to property entitling him to compensation if deprived by the state.

† These articles were added by the First Amendment Act of 1951 as they enabled the state to acquire estates despite any inconsistency with fundamental rights.

(i) While the abolition of zamindaris and the numerous intermediaries between the State and the tiller of the soil has been achieved with the help of Articles 31A and 31B, the power to modify, and in some cases extinguish, the rights of owners of large agricultural holdings not comprised in estates, is required for completing our programme of land reform. It is necessary to fix maximum limits to the size of agricultural holdings and to provide for the proper redistribution of any lands held in excess of such maximum.

(ii) One Central Act and two State Acts which provide for the acquisition and requisitioning of immovable property for the relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons have been declared partially invalid on the ground that the principles for determining compensation laid down in those Acts are not correct. Two or three other State Acts enacted for a similar purpose are liable to be challenged on the same ground. It is necessary that these enactments should be validated.

*From a letter dated 26 August 1956*

In the troubles we had recently in various parts of India, culminating in Gujarat and Ahmedabad, one fact has stood out: a public demonstration is held; this tends to become violent; the violence grows and there is arson and stone-throwing; there is conflict with the police; there is firing by the police resulting in the deaths of a few persons and in injury to many others. Often the persons who have died are quite innocent; sometimes a woman or child dies. As soon as this happens, popular sentiment gets greatly excited, not so much because of the original cause, but because of the firing and the deaths of apparently innocent people. There is much more violence then, more conflicts with the police. And so this vicious circle goes on

creating conflict and bitterness and a wall between the Government and administration on the one side and the people on the other.

This has been a story often repeated in various parts of India. It is a bad story, bad from the point of view of the people and of the Government. We may argue about it and defend what Government has done, but that does not take away from the badness of it. We shall have to find out some other way of dealing with a situation like this. Of course, this should not happen when there is close contact and understanding between administration and the people. But there are anti-social and other forces which can nevertheless make breaches in that contact or incite people to violent behaviour. If we respond to that violence by violence on the part of the Government, we play into the hands of those who want trouble and we widen the gap between Government and the people. Where firing takes place and deaths, there is an immediate and powerful reaction among people of all kinds against Government, even though the firing might be justified.

Recent cases have occurred where there was an enquiry into some incident of firing by the police. Often the enquiry has led to a finding that the firing was not justified. Whenever police firing takes place, there is a demand for an enquiry. It seems obvious to me that there can be profitable enquiry into occurrences such as took place in Bombay, because that was more in the nature of a widespread revolt than some individual case of firing. But, normally, it seems to me desirable there should be an enquiry. Even in the interests of the police, it seems desirable because otherwise they are inevitably condemned in the Public mind.

But far more important than this is to avoid the firing. We cannot say that under no circumstances must there be firing, because sometimes there can be no choice about it and not to do this is to yield a city to violent and disorderly elements and abdicate the function of Government. At the same time, I have a feeling that there has been

far too often a recourse to firing by the police than there need have been. Our police appear to be becoming rather too much trigger-conscious. In most countries the police do not even have rifles and their chief function is the regulation of traffic, etc. or to deal with criminals. This kind of repeated conflict between the police and the people generally is very bad from the point of view of both, and each begins to look on the other as the enemy. Where firing takes place and death, an added element of extreme bitterness comes in. The police suffer, of course, but so does also the Government. After all, none of us who are Ministers likes this kind of thing and every report of such firing distresses us, more especially when young men and women are the victim of it. . . .

I feel, therefore, and I am sure you will agree with me, that we must examine this matter carefully and issue strict injunctions to our police not to use fire-arms, except under the gravest danger. It should be pointed out to them that we do not approve of the use of the fire-arms and we shall examine each case very strictly. I can imagine a case like the burning of the High Court building at Indore when firing had to be resorted to; or some other cases of widespread arson or individual killing that may be going on which has to be met in this way, as there is no other way. But, broadly speaking, we must try to put an end to firing by the police and the strictest injunction should be issued in regard to it. The police can use their baton or lathis, though even that should be done in moderation. They can use tear gas bombs where considered necessary. But let us try to put an end to this vicious circle of firing and killing which leads to such disastrous results.

*From a letter dated 31 December 1958*

There is one matter which has been troubling me very considerably. This is judicial delays. The figures that I have seen of arrears of work

in some High Courts are appalling. This matter is being considered by our Law Commission. That Commission consists of eminent men. But I suppose they think rather in a groove, accepting the expensive system that we have put up as a base. We have increased the number of High Court judges, but this has made little difference to the piling up of arrears. Demands for more judges come. If necessary, we should have more judges. But how many more? Some one calculated that if we are to make any kind of real inroad on this load of arrears, we might require nearly a hundred more judges. I suppose that in this matter, as in others, Parkinson's Law will apply. More judges, more lawyers, more work, more delay—and more demand for judges.

Surely, this leads to the inevitable conclusion that procedures have to be simplified. I dare not suggest in what way this should be done, but the fact remains that the present system with its procedure delays justice so much that it sometimes ceases to be justice.

In judicial matters, as in so many others, we have often to think of institutional changes. What was good and suitable at another time when the State moved in a leisurely way or was more or less static, obviously does not fit in with the rapid changes that are coming and changing society rapidly. We cannot take things for granted simply because they have come down to us.

# III

# NATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

'More and more it is being realized in other parts of the world that we in India are engaged in a mighty adventure. To build up this country and to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment in a democratic way on this scale is something that has not been done anywhere.'

The Western world, Nehru believed, had either paid insufficient attention to economic liberation or acquired it at the cost of individual rights. Without socio-economic freedom the departure of British rule would have little impact on the quality of life of India's millions. Planning was at the heart of Nehru's effort to marry a welfare state with democracy. Although he disagreed with Russia's curbing of political liberties, he took great inspiration from its determination and resolve towards economic self-sufficiency. In the extracts that follow, we notice three facets of Nehru's economic thinking. First, Nehru insisted on a scientific rationalist approach towards government policy. Amidst lengthy speeches and loud debates, policy risked being written without adequate data and information. Such a strategy, Nehru felt, was akin to guesswork and would leave governance to luck. Second, while serious data collection and statistical work could engender enlightened policy, India's great challenge was the implementation of its plans. The simple adoption of an economic policy would not, by itself or easily, bring about progress. Finally, Nehru urged against a rigid textbook approach towards the economy. Controls, for example, were not to be valued as such. Only a planned economy could uplift India from poverty, but state regulation had a focus and the public sector's role was to occupy fields of 'strategic importance'.

*From a letter dated 19 December 1947*

I have just returned from a brief tour of Allahabad, Cawnpore and Calcutta. For me it has been an unforgettable experience. I saw hundreds of thousands of faces—there were 10 lakhs on the Calcutta *maidan* alone—all so eager, so fun of occasion. . . . I felt an immense and almost overpowering sense of responsibility. Many of the bodies were weak and emaciated and the clothes were tattered; and these millions look to us with a faith which is almost childlike in its simplicity to give them food, clothes and shelter. We have in the past, in taking part in the political fight against the British rule, been in continuous touch with this emaciation and this misery which have, in fact, been the driving force of our activity. But we can no longer, now that we are in the seats of powers, afford any delay in the solution of this problem. That would be a betrayal of a trust; and it would spell disaster on the country.

The Central Government has, during the last few days, been thinking more and more of this basic problem of poverty—which we had temporarily put in a second place amidst the preoccupations of communal disorder. . . .

While on this subject of economic conditions in the country, I would like to draw your attention to the problem of the Grow-More-Food Campaign.* An officer of our Ministry of Agriculture has started on a tour of various provinces with a view to ascertaining why this campaign was such a failure and what can be done to get it going again on the right lines. That it has been a failure is a fact which, I fear, admits of no doubt and yet it is astonishing that it should have been

* Fearing that rice from Burma would not be available during the Second World War, the Indian government launched this campaign in April 1942. After the war, the interim government decided, in September 1946, to continue with the campaign for another five years.

a failure considering that everyone knew of the urgency of making it a success and all the resources of provincial governments and the Centre were harnessed to make it a success. This is a matter which requires urgent review on the part of all provincial governments.

I am aware that the proper assessment of the Grow-More-Food Campaign was rendered difficult by the paucity and, in some areas, of the complete absence of statistical data. . . . I hope your government will take every possible step to mobilise all statistical data lying unused in village, *tahsil* and district records and undertake special enquiries for collecting such data as may not already be available.

*From a letter dated 15 April 1948*

I have just come back after a brief two-day visit to Orissa. I went there to inaugurate the construction of the Hirakud Dam and to lay the foundation stone of the new capital of Orissa at Bhubaneswar. . . .

The Hirakud Dam is part of the great Mahanadi Scheme of river valley development. The entire scheme is a mighty one and when it is fully realised, it ought to change the whole face of the province. The disastrous floods that have periodically overwhelmed Orissa will be a thing of the past. Large fresh areas will be brought under cultivation. The erosion of the soil will be stopped and more than two million kilowatts of electric power will be available for industry or other purposes. It is proposed also to have a deep water canal to the sea for inland navigation. All this is a fascinating vision of the future which fills one with enthusiasm. As I threw in some concrete, which was to form the base of the great Hirakud Dam, a sense of adventure seized me and I forgot for a while the many troubles that beset us. I felt that these troubles will pass, but that the great dam and all that follow from it will endure for ages to come. This is the first of our great schemes on which work has actually started. I hope that the

Damodar Valley Scheme will also be inaugurated soon and the many others about which we have been thinking so long. Unfortunately most of these schemes and projects have taken many long years in process of incubation, sometimes as long as 30 or 40 years. The Mahanadi project is an exception as it was thought of first only three or four years ago and a great deal of work has been put in since then.

*From a letter dated 3 August 1948*

The economic situation shows no sign of improvement and the whole question of controls, among other things, has come up for reconsideration. So far as the cotton textile policy is concerned, control has, for all practical purposes, been reimposed. We must confess that we took a wrong step when we removed this control, or, at any rate, we took it in a wrong manner, and the results have been very harmful. While a small number of people, manufacturers and dealers in cotton textiles, have made money, vast numbers of others have been hard hit. When disparities in income increase in any way, there is inevitable trouble. All legislation and financial policy has to aim today at removing these disparities as far as possible and gradually working towards a common level of income, or, at any rate, incomes which do not differ too much. The removal of controls has worked the other way, and apart from hitting hard both the middle classes and the poorer classes, they have introduced a psychology of extreme dissatisfaction in the people. It has been felt that various sections of the community do not shoulder burdens equally.

This reimposition of control on textiles casts a heavy burden on the provinces. Its success depends upon the efficient enforcement of it there and the proper selection of wholesalers and retailers. It is

essential that cases of infringement of control are tried expeditiously and offenders severely punished. Leniency in this matter, instead of proving a deterrent, actually encourages violation of the law.

The steep rise in the price level has hit particularly hard the people with fixed incomes, such as government servants, employees in trade, industrial labour, etc. The consumers' cooperative societies, to meet the requirements of these people particularly, should be encouraged. It is also desirable to restrict the sales from government controlled shops to people belonging to certain specific income groups. Supplies to these people should be on the basis of coupons to be issued by government.

This control on textiles is only a small part of the economic problem which faces us. I shall not write more about this here except to say that it will require all our wisdom and energy to deal with this matter. We may point out a number of factors which have gone to worsen the economic situation, and we may be right, but the causes are deep-seated, and therefore the remedies must fit in with them.

*From a letter dated 3 February 1949*

Perhaps the most important problem for us from the economic point of view is the food problem. I fear we have no record of success in regard to this and we have to face grave difficulties. We must tackle this afresh, not in a departmental way, but as emergencies are tackled. It is essentially a problem which requires:

(i) An authority which can deal rapidly both in regard to policy and implementation

(ii) Complete cooperation between the provincial governments and the Central Government.

(iii) Constant watching of results by statistical and other methods.

(iv) The cooperation of the public, that is to say continuous approach to the public to inform them of how they can cooperate and measures taken to facilitate this. . . .

It is clear that on account of a number of causes—the last World War, partition, etc.,—the situation we have to meet is not a temporary upset but something much more radical. It is clear also that while we must and will import foodstuffs from outside to fill the gap in India, we cannot rely indefinitely on outside sources. This import of large quantities of food from outside is having a disastrous effect on our economy. It is not absolutely necessary for a country to be self-sufficient in food. But any large gap is a dangerous thing. Gandhiji constantly laid stress on our not relying on outside sources for food and to adjust our own supply and modes of living to the circumstances. I do not think a sufficient effort has been made to this end. There has been a good deal of talk about 'Grow More Food', but it is not at all clear what the results of this campaign have been. We have come to rely more and more on food from outside, which means dollars. That is a very unhealthy situation. We may carry on for a year or two in this way, but something has to be done to put an end to it within a reasonable period.

This does not mean, as has been suggested, that we must stop industrial growth or reduce it to a minimum and concentrate all our energies on food production. That will produce an unbalanced economy and the progress of India would be retarded. We must therefore aim at a balance between agriculture and industry.

We have a number of big schemes in progress or in preparation which will lead to more food production. At the same time, we have to remember that the population is growing and this will consume all the additional food, without bridging the gap. The population problem is another important problem. I need not go into it here. We have, of course, to proceed with our big schemes and, at the same

time, to consider smaller schemes which might bring quicker results. The Grow-More-Food Campaign was really aimed at these smaller schemes. But it is impossible to find, with our present data, how far it has succeeded. There has been an impression that results had not been adequate and much of the money supplied has been wasted or not usefully employed. All these matters have to be gone into.

One aspect of the question, to which Gandhiji always referred, was an attempt to change our food habits so as to bring them more in accord with existing facts. If there is not enough rice, more wheat should be consumed. If both wheat and rice are lacking, then we must take to something else to some extent. It must be remembered that other countries have suffered greatly owing to food scarcity during the last war. They faced the situation not only by rationing but by inducing the public to take to other kinds of food which were available. Indeed, there was no choice about it. We are so accustomed to our age-long habits that we do not easily adapt ourselves to a change, but circumstances compel us to do so today. Indeed, it is well known, that purely from the health point of view some of our food habits require a change.

*From a letter dated 15 August 1949*

Both the Russian example and the Japanese, so utterly different in their approaches and in the objectives aimed at, teach us many lessons of what can be done by a people, if they are disciplined and hard working, and can plan. Japan probably has even more to teach us in this respect, because Russia gives us a very complicated picture, much of which we like and much of which we dislike. In Japan also, there was much we disliked. But the lesson to learn is the will to achieve, and of achievement, without any substantial outside aid. Both these countries built up their social capital through their

own efforts. If outside help is available, the process is speedier and therefore outside aid should be welcomed. But a reliance on outside aid too much may result in a feeling of helplessness, without aid, and that is a dangerous and harmful feeling. Therefore, we must only think of outside aid as an accessory, the main thing being our own effort. That effort must not only be disciplined but also planned, or else there is waste. It is this careful planning that both Russia and Japan have to teach us.

In our country, situated as it is, it is inevitable that the State should help in this planning on a large scale, even though a great part of our national economy be left to private enterprise. But the State can only help people who help themselves and who bring a certain enthusiasm to the task. They must have a feeling that they are building something that is permanent, that, in fact, they are the builders of the new India. If that feeling pervades them, then all work becomes a pleasure, bringing a certain satisfaction, and all inconveniences are of little account.

As you know, I believe in our taking the best out of the West. I do not believe in a narrow nationalism, and I think that India came down in the scale of nations in the past because of her narrowness in outlook and because of many evil customs that developed and fed this narrowness and exclusiveness. Nevertheless, I am quite clear in my mind that we shall not make real progress by trying to copy Western methods and ways of life. We shall have to hold to our anchor and build on our own foundations. Those foundations were well and truly laid by Gandhiji. . . .

Sometimes many of us may feel a little tired and a little down-hearted because of these troubles and difficulties that pursue us, and because of our own failings and little-mindedness and lack of faith, and there may be even a tendency to escape from this hard labour which does not always appear to bear fruit. Yet there is no escape

and there must be no escape, for we are committed and pledged and dedicated to a cause, and there is no happiness except in working for that cause. Also good work and honest work must necessarily bear fruit. Of that I am convinced.

*From a letter dated 1 December 1949*

We should not expect any wonderful results to follow immediately from planning. The machinery has to be built up and has to gather experience and, through trial and error, to learn how to act efficiently. But the need for that machinery is obvious. Of course, everything depends upon the human factor and the quality of men who run the machine. . . .

If a planning authority is set up at the Centre, it naturally follows that each province or state should have some counterpart of it, closely associated with the central authority. It follows that there must be the closest cooperation between the provinces and the Centre in this respect. Also, of course, that each department of government, whether at the Centre or in the provinces, must coordinate its activities with other departments. There has been far too much independent functioning all over the place, and sometimes one department does not even know what the other is doing in some matter which concerns it. Provinces are autonomous and I believe definitely in provincial autonomy and a large measure of decentralisation. But there are certain tendencies which, in the name of autonomy, prevent coordinated functioning. That seems to me to be dangerous and harmful. Even the talk of linguistic provinces and a fresh demarcation of provincial boundaries, legitimate as it is in many cases, emphasises the separateness of provinces, as if almost they were independent entities and not partners in a common concern.

Another matter . . . is the divorce, often enough, between authority and responsibility . . . I have myself noticed how slowly governments function because of this hiatus. No big undertaking or business can be run on this basis. There must be, of course, checking and constant supervision. But to hold up work for petty sanctions from distant authority is not only to delay but waste money and energy. It is not sufficiently realised that time in this context is money. Every delay in a scheme is costing money all the time. Whether in business or in military affairs, policy is laid down, the proper officers chosen, and a large measure of freedom of action is given within the limits of that policy and direction. Constant supervision is, of course, always necessary, but in a way so that it does not impede work.

The basis of planning has to be proper information to be derived from reliable statistics. We lack these statistics. Hence, even in such an important matter as food production, we grope in the dark and proceed on figures based on guess work. We must function in a more scientific manner and, therefore, the building up of statistical work is of the highest importance. I hope that we shall have your full cooperation in this.

*From a letter dated 3 August 1950*

The food situation has suddenly grown worse. . . . In local areas, especially in Madras, Bihar and Bombay, there have been serious shortages due to various reasons. There has been a lack of rain in some places and floods in Bihar and Saurashtra. But the main difficulty has been a defective administrative machinery to deal with procurement and distribution. This has become a very urgent problem for us because it does not matter much what progress we make in production or otherwise, if the machinery in the States cannot take advantage of it. The situation in Bihar has more especially made us

think hard. Our Food Minister, Shri K.M. Munshi, is convinced that there is plenty of food round about in Bihar itself. But anti-social elements grab it and keep it underground while people starve. How are we to meet this situation? We cannot look on supinely at the activities of relatively small groups of people holding up that whole community to ransom. If the existing law is not adequate to deal with this situation, something more has to be devised. Indeed, it may be necessary to declare a state of emergency in a particular region where the state machinery is not functioning properly and there is great scarcity and distress. . . .

[The Food Minister has] pointed out the difficulties of the Centre in dealing with this problem. The Centre, of course, gets all the blame and each State demands all kinds of help from the Centre all the time. But the Centre is not an inexhaustible storehouse for everything needed. It is only a co-ordinating factor drawing sustenance from the States. If the States fail to do their duty, the Centre cannot discharge its functions. There has been far too much slackness in some of the States, more especially those that are called surplus States. There has been hardly any real attempt in some States (not all) to profit by the increased production and to procure it. Official machinery is weak and sometimes almost absent. Apparently there is a fear that if any effective action is taken, the political consequences in the shape of votes may be undesirable. The result is that the State takes little trouble itself and throws the blame upon the Centre. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

It is not much good our blaming each other. The point is that we have got to grip this situation and forget elections and everything else for the time being. If we fail in doing so, then we automatically fail in everything else too later. It is a matter for very serious consideration for each State how best to put forward all its energy in creating proper machinery for procurement and distribution. All our Grow-More-

Food schemes will founder if that machinery is lacking. The Central Government is perfectly prepared to assume responsibility, wherever needed. At present, it is in the unenviable position of responsibility for everything without power to do much.

You will forgive me for writing in this way and generalizing about the States. I am trying to avoid mentioning particular States which have not come up to the mark. Others, of course, have done well. I should like to mention especially the way in which the Saurashtra Government met a serious flood situation with efficiency. I feel strongly that our government machinery generally is not functioning as it should and this is particularly true of some of the States. If we do not pull up now, we shall have to suffer very serious consequences. . . .

Most of the States have been struggling with the problem of abolition of jagirdaris and zamindaris. These are, of course, essential parts of Congress policy and programme and there has been already great delay in giving effect to our promises. We have been held up by the extraordinary intricacy of the problem, more especially in regard to compensation. Various States have proceeded on their own lines. Some have got completely held up. It is obvious that such a problem must be viewed as a whole and only then can effective steps be taken. What sometimes happens is that a first step is thought of and the rest is left for future consideration. High Courts sometimes intervene and declare State laws as *ultra vires*. It is clear that we have got to go through this programme of abolition of zamindaris and to avoid all delay, for delay is dangerous. Unfortunately, the law and the Constitution sometimes come in the way. I think we could devise methods which are in conformity with the Constitution. It is certain that if the law comes in the way, ultimately the law will have to be changed, because it is of the utmost importance that this agrarian reform should be put through.

*From a letter dated 18 August 1950*

[The food and the price-rise issue] is a matter of utmost moment as our whole economy and future depend on it. There are two major aspects of this problem. One is the policy of controls and how to give effect to it, the other is how to deal with people who flout and break our laws and rules, who indulge in black-marketing and who deliberately raise prices whenever they have the chance to do so. As regards controls, it must be clearly understood that, in existing circumstances, the principal controls cannot possibly be removed. Some people vaguely imagine that many of our troubles are due to controls. It is true that controls bring a measure of corruption. But it is equally true that to remove controls would be to invite disaster. Therefore, there must be no doubt on this point.

We live on the verge of a possible world war. If, to the misfortune of humanity, this comes, then it would be exceedingly difficult for us to import any foodstuffs. We shall have to make the best of what we have got or what we can grow. This is patent enough, but it requires repetition. We have got into the easy habit of getting food from abroad, even though that has cost us vast sums of money. When we cannot get it from abroad, what will we do? It is time that we considered this question from this point of view of a war emergency, and that all of us, whether we are producers or consumers, officials or non-officials, sellers or buyers, should become crisis-minded in this respect and deal with this situation in a spirit of urgency. The only possible way for us to pull through is to pool our resources and to apportion them justly. No State can function for itself and forget its neighbour. It is natural for each State to think itself first. But if it does so to the injury of other States, then it is serving the cause of India badly. The surplus States must also tighten their belts like the others and give generously of their abundance to the other States. Effective

procurement thus becomes essential. Some States have efficient systems of procurement, others have given little thought to this or, at any rate, have not produced results. That is not good enough. Indeed, even within a State we have seen scarcity while there is still food with people who hoard in the hope of profit. This kind of thing must be made impossible. You will no doubt discuss these matters at the conference in Delhi. I hope that that conference will not consist merely of lengthy speeches, but will show an earnest approach by men determined to face and overcome this crisis at whatever cost. Many people think in terms of the general elections to come next year. Perhaps that is difficult to avoid. But failure to meet a crisis with all its dreadful consequences will affect those elections far more than any system of procurement, however hard that may be.

The other aspect of this problem relates not only to food but to other essential commodities and the rise in prices. Prices have recently risen chiefly because of rumours of war as also because of irresponsible statements made by some people. A Member of Parliament stated the other day that famine was coming to Bengal. That statement had no justification. But it produced its evil effect and immediately led to hoarding, thus bringing about a crisis. How are we to deal with these hoarders and anti-social dealers? Recent legislation has given authority to Parliament to deal with this matter and has laid down heavy penalties for offenders. What is more necessary, however, is some speedy method of catching and punishing those who offend. I trust that these methods will soon be evolved in consultation with you and other Chief Ministers.

*From a letter dated 21 April 1951*

The food situation has two major aspects—(1) how to meet the present crisis, and (2) how to solve this problem basically. The

first naturally engrosses our attention, but the second is equally important and has to be tackled from now. The immediate difficulty has inevitably to be met by large-scale imports of foodgrains; as you must know, we have tried to get them from the four quarters of the earth. We have purchased nearly four million tons and we are trying to get more and more. Even what we have purchased cannot easily be brought here for lack of shipping. In this connection, I should like to say that we have been greatly helped by the British Government who have gone out of their way to see that we got the necessary ships. Recently, the U.S. Government also allowed us to use some of their old mothball ships. There is, therefore, some improvement in the shipping situation and we hope that adequate quantities of food will flow in. Yet, the margin between now and the monsoon is a narrow one.

For some months now, the proposed gift of foodgrains from America has hung somewhere in the air. You will remember that what we asked for was not a gift but for payment on easy and deferred terms. If the gift comes, we are not going to refuse it. But we have repeatedly made it clear that we cannot barter away our domestic or foreign policies for gifts from abroad, however much we might need the latter. It may be a hard choice, but is an inevitable one. . . .

Meanwhile, we are approaching both the Soviet Union and China and both have made substantial offers of foodgrains to us. The Chinese offer is a more attractive one from the point of view of price. The difficulty there is that of shipping. We have sent one of our officers to Peking to fix up matters there and we have immediately bought some quantity of rice from South China. The Russian offer has one advantage—the Soviets will supply most of the shipping needed. But the price quoted for wheat is very high and there is an insistence on our supplying some commodities which we ourselves lack, like raw jute and raw cotton. We are trying to get rice from both

Burma and Siam and our Food Minister is likely to go to Rangoon for this purpose soon.

There is one matter that I should like to bring to your particular notice. While a good part of India is suffering privation and sometimes near starvation, it yet remains true that in some other parts there are surpluses of foodgrains. And yet, as it is, we cannot somehow get hold of this surplus. In some parts the surplus is sold openly at a trifle over controlled prices. This curious situation is almost Gilbertian, if it was not so tragic. The Central Government cannot directly procure from these areas and the Provincial Governments either will not or cannot. I should have thought that at this time of crisis, nothing would be allowed to come in the way of our tapping all our resources in food. But some of our State Governments think more of their States than of the rest of India, not perhaps realizing fully that what happens to other parts of India ultimately affects them also powerfully. This is a very serious matter and I would like you to give serious thought to it. Cannot those areas which have a surplus be made to supply a great part of this surplus; cannot procurement by State agency be intensified? Or is there some means of our gaining our ends! It becomes increasingly impossible to look on at this obvious unfairness which is doing so much harm to our country.

*From a letter dated 22 July 1951*

The Planning Commission's report, I might add, is not a party document, but the appraisal and recommendations of a competent body of men who have given careful thought to this matter for over a year and consulted not only all the State Governments, but many representatives of various groups and parties. Their approach

therefore has been strictly non-party and has been conditioned by their desire to get the largest measure of agreement for the plan they might propose. The plan is necessarily limited by our resources and therefore a careful analysis of our actual and potential resources during the next five years has been made. No such analysis can be precise, and any odd development might affect those resources. Nevertheless, planning can only be undertaken on the basis of such estimates which may be reconsidered and varied from time to time. The Planning Commission is firmly of opinion that any really big effort towards the achievement of the objectives they have set down must involve widespread public co-operation. The plan should be in effect a national plan and something more than a mere party plan, however big the party. To put it differently, the principal planks of the programme should have this large measure of agreement and a desire to work together for their implementation. Some people or groups may wish to go further and they are at perfect liberty to work to that end.

The Planning Commission has drawn up what they call a preliminary outline of a Five Year Plan. They have invited criticisms from Government and non-official organizations. After receiving these, they hope to finalize their programme. The important question then arises as to its implementation. We have had too many plans in the past which remained at the planning stage and no machinery has been evolved to implement them. Therefore, the most important aspect for us to consider is the implementation and the machinery for it. The Commission have themselves dealt with this and Government will have to give it full thought. It is clear that the Planning Commission is not something which ceases to be, after submitting the plan. It has to continue as it is, or in some slightly different form.

*From a letter dated 16 June 1952*

Among the major problems that we have to face is the land problem. It is not only our problem but the problem of large parts of Asia. For many years past we have stood for the abolition of the zamindari system. We were held up by the law courts but at last the way is more or less clear. Many of our provinces have already gone far in this direction. I should like to impress on those States, which have not thus far taken any steps towards the abolition of the zamindari system, to do so with great speed. This is an essential preliminary to all progress. This is so both practically and psychologically. It has become a symbol of essential change and we cannot afford to delay in this any longer.

The abolition of the zamindari system is therefore most important. But, it must always be remembered that that by itself does not solve the land problem. It is only a necessary preliminary step, a removal of a barrier to reform and the introduction of a just land system. We must therefore give careful thought to the next step which has to come almost immediately after. I shall address you about this separately in my capacity as Chairman of the Planning Commission and I shall ask you to let me have your views about these next steps. Our objective in this as in other matters is social justice and at the same time greater production. If in trying to bring about social justice, we reduce production, then that social justice itself becomes unstable and without adequate foundation. Mere greater production without social justice is not only wrong in itself but also is unstable and without a strong foundation. How then are we to do this? That is a question which you have to consider. Even after the liquidation of the zamindari system, there will continue a large disparity of holdings of land. Should we try to equalize this progressively and if so how, without doing injury to our production apparatus? Should

we aim at cooperative village movement, or large-scale co-operative farms or individual ownership? These and like questions have to be solved. Conditions differ greatly in India and perhaps a single and general answer will not suit all the States, even though our ultimate objective everywhere might be the same. I should like you to give thought to these matters immediately and to let me have your views.

*From a letter dated 17 October 1952*

Yesterday and today we have been discussing the draft report of the Planning Commission which contains the Five Year Plan. The draft itself is rather voluminous and it is not easy to consider such a big report in all its manifold aspects. Naturally we have concentrated on some major points in it. In the draft Plan, we have tried to go as far as we possibly can, without taking undue risks about our economy. We tabulate our resources and try to estimate what they are, using such statistical and other data that we may possess. The human factor, however, is not easy to appraise or tabulate. A people who take up anything with faith and enthusiasm bring an amount of energy which is incalculable. So, much depends upon the way we tackle this great effort. It will depend on the efficiency and deep interest of Governments; it will depend even more on how we can make our people appreciate the fullness and significance of this Plan which is the result of more than two years of hard labour. It is not merely a Plan conceived and put out by a few persons who are members of our Planning Commission. It is definitely the result of a joint effort of large numbers of people. The Planning Commission has consulted every prominent group in India and discussed various aspects of the Plan with them. A little over a year ago, they published the draft outline Plan. This attracted a great deal of attention as well as a great deal of criticism. The Commission has taken advantage of

this criticism to revise the Plan in many particulars. The Plan is thus truly the result of a democratic approach and widespread discussion and consideration. . . .

In a sense, this Plan will be finalized and I hope that all of us in India will endeavour to give effect to it. But there can be no real finality about planning as it depends on developments as they take place and we have to learn from the experience we gather in working it. We shall adhere to the Plan, but we shall not hesitate to add to it or to vary it if circumstances so require. Our resources are limited and do not come anywhere near our wishes in this matter. But it is quite possible that we might be able to add to our resources by means which cannot at present be easily computed. This can be by some other forms of utilization of our manpower, for ultimately labour is capital. Also with a proper drive we might encourage saving in many ways and use this for development purposes. In order to give a further incentive to this saving, we might utilize the money for the development of the particular area concerned. We have, therefore, to look upon development loans and saving schemes, whether of the Centre or of the States, not as something to be carried through by governmental effort alone, but something which require the fullest measure of public support. Apart from the money and labour thus obtained, we want to give a sense of partnership to millions of people in India—a partnership into this magnificent adventure of building up new India.

*From a letter dated 29 October 1952*

[W]e are now engaged in finalizing our Five Year Plan. Any Plan involves an attempt to control the economy of the country. The basic factor of this economy is food. This means that we must keep food prices down and try to lower them from their present level. On no account must they be allowed to go up, as that would upset everything

we are aiming at. Secondly, we must always have large stocks in hand to meet any emergency or tendency to a rise in prices. If we are to keep large stocks, we have to procure foodgrains in sufficient quantities. Some kind of procurement has thus to continue. We have also to reduce progressively imports of foodgrains, as they are a heavy drain on our resources. What measure of controlled rationing we should continue in selected places is a matter which has to be considered on the merits, keeping in view always the factors mentioned above.

Therefore, in any event, certain basic controls will have to continue and it would be wrong to think that we are putting an end to controls. That is the essence of a planned economy. It is within these limits that we consider any aspect of the food problem and the question of partial decontrol. . . .

It is well to keep in mind what has happened in Pakistan. After a number of bumper years, when there was a large surplus of food, a bad year followed and suddenly the whole food economy of Pakistan began to crumble. Pakistan had had a lot of trouble over food this year, even though the previous years were so good. We should take a lesson from this and not think in short-term period. Fortunately, there have been definite improvements in our food situation. Although there are also some undesirable trends in regard to prices, we should take advantage of the present improvement to provide for the future.

*From a letter dated 20 November 1952*

Our ideal has been of self-sufficiency in food. That means no imports, except perhaps on very special occasions when there is some calamity to face. To reduce our imports as rapidly as possible has now become a major problem because this question is tied up with out entire development programme. The more we import, the less we invest in development. We should, therefore, make every effort to reduce our

imports, taking care always to keep adequate stocks in hand, so as to be able to control the food situation in the country. This means, *inter alia*, as much procurement as can be had, subject to other relevant considerations.

In particular, the question of rice imports is troublesome as rice from abroad costs us much more than wheat imports. We are one of the biggest rice-producing countries in the world. It is strange, therefore, that we should be deficit in rice. I believe that our overall deficit in rice is about two per cent. Surely it should be in our power to cover this deficit by greater production or better distribution and prevention of wastage and misuse. If necessary, we might even revert to an appeal which I previously made that wheat-eaters should give up rice and reserve it for the rice-eating States. In this matter of rice, I should particularly invite your co-operation because this is intimately bound up with our entire development programme and the strength of our basic economy. The less we import it, the more can we undertake schemes of development. I am told that there probably is enough rice in the country if we can but use it to the best advantage. But we have experienced some difficulty in some of the rice-growing States in getting enough surplus rice from there for the deficit areas which require rice. I would earnestly request you to help us in this matter and to make available as much rice from your State as you can possibly give us.

We have stated repeatedly that our basic policy of controlling the economy of the country must continue not only now, but later. At the same time, we have gone somewhat in the direction of decontrol within certain areas. There is nothing contradictory about this, except to the doctrinaire. Controls, in order to be effective, should not be spread out all over the place thus making for ineffectiveness and a great deal of harassment. Effective control means control of strategic points and allowing free trade in limited areas. Even in the

authoritarian countries, where there is the fullest control of their economy, there is often a field where a free market flourishes. What we have to see is that this limited free market does not affect the basic control of the situation. Subject to that and subject to other considerations, we are entirely justified in removing petty controls. Even in regard to procurement, it is generally better to deal effectively with the big growers and to leave the small grower out of that picture. The real crux of the question is how far we are in possession of the strategic points and how far we have got a large enough stock in hand to meet any emergency or any mal-distribution. Therefore, a mere theoretical consideration of the question of controls and decontrols has little significance. If we hold on to our basic policy, we can relax or adjust ourselves in many minor matters, thus perhaps helping that basic policy much more and, at the same time, lessening the harassment of the public.

*From a letter dated 22 December 1952*

By approving [the Five Year Plan] in Parliament, we have given the final seal to this Plan and now the time comes to implement it. It is true that implementation has been going on all the time and nearly two years out of the five are over. Nevertheless, we have to make a new approach now, a more positive, concentrated and integrated one. More particularly, we have to rely on public co-operation.

On the State Government lies a special responsibility in this respect and we have no interval to rest before we start on the next stage of the journey. There is no resting place for any of us who are in positions of responsibility, for the world and India move on and if we delay, we are likely to be left behind.

The first thing to be done is to give the widest publicity to this Plan or to its essential features and its basic outlook. The Planning

Commission hope to provide you with adequate material for this, but we should not wait even for that. There is material enough in the printed summary that they have produced and we must remember that the best approach still in India is the personal one, through public meeting or group discussion. Now that Parliament and most of our State Assemblies are not in session, members should go to their constituencies and make an intensive drive on the subject of the Five Year Plan. Unfortunately and rather unreasonably, most of the opposition groups have criticized or even condemned the Plan. They have often done so for entirely contradictory reasons, the same person criticizing it for not going far enough and for going too far, having regard to our resources. The responsibility of those who believe in the Plan is thus all the greater.

People in the States and in districts will naturally be interested chiefly in their own part of this Plan and what they can do. This part should be explained, but the approach should always be an all-India approach and an attempt should be made to explain this great conception of planning for the whole country. Behind the Plan lies the conception of India's unity and of a mighty co-operative effort of all the people of India. That should always be stressed and the inter-relation of one part of India with another pointed out. If we adopt this approach, we shall be dealing with the major disease or weakness of India, i.e., the fissiparous tendencies and parochial outlook that often confront us in this country. The more we think of this balanced picture of the whole of India and of its many-sided activities, which are so interrelated with one another, the less we are likely to go astray in the crooked paths of provincialism, communalism, casteism and all other disruptive and disintegrating tendencies. That is a hard task, for it means changing the mentality of large numbers of people. It is a task which will not be completed within these three remaining

years of the Plan, but will have to be continued till we root out and put an end to these tendencies.

After a long static period, India became dynamic again. That dynamism took a political shape to begin with, though always behind it was the economic problem. We succeeded on the political plane and now have to face the economic and the social problems. *Inquilab Zindabad*; we cried often enough. That revolution is only partly a political one. The real revolution deals with economic and social problems also. To some extent, it is widely realized that economic changes on a major scale are necessary, but it is still not adequately realized that social changes are also an essential part of the revolution that we have to pass through.

The Plan is comprehensive and there lies a tremendous deal of thought and discussion behind it. It is, on the whole, a cautious Plan, even a moderate one, and yet it is far-reaching and, if we so will it, we can take it as far as we like. It is a challenge to all of us and in the measure that we meet that challenge, we build the new India and justify our work. We have, therefore, to take this up in all earnestness and try to infuse in our work something of the spirit of a missionary for a cause. We have to remember always that it is not merely the governmental machinery that counts in this, but even more so the enthusiasm and co-operation of the people. Our people must have the sensation of partnership in a mighty enterprise, of being fellow-travellers towards the next goal that they and we have set before us. The Plan may be, and has to be, based on the calculations of economists, statisticians and the like, but figures and statistics, very important as they are, do not give life to the scheme. That breath of life comes in other ways, and it is for us now to make this Plan, which is enshrined in cold print, something living, vital and dynamic, which captures the imagination of our people.

*From a letter dated 3 March 1953*

More and more it is being realized in other parts of the world that we in India are engaged in a mighty adventure. To build up this country and to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment in a democratic way on this scale is something that has not been done anywhere. The magnitude of the task and the difficulties we have to overcome may sometimes oppress us, but, at the same time, they should fill us with the enthusiasm that great undertakings bring with them. Probably the next five to ten years are the critical years for us. If we carry on during this period as a stable, progressive country, making good and advancing, then we have succeeded and we have little to fear in the future. Even if the pace is not quite so fast as we would like it to be, the mere fact of continuous progress on a stable basis would be a triumph for large-scale democratic working. There is danger in our becoming static and slow-moving; there is equally danger in trying to go faster than circumstances or our resources permit us to do. The middle course, the golden mean is always difficult.

We have set before us the ideal of the welfare State. The President referred to this in his address. The welfare State means welfare for all and not for a section of the community only. It means productive and gainful employment for all and the removal of the grave disparities in incomes and methods of living that exist in India today. We get used to these, but every foreigner who comes here is struck even now by these great disparities. How are we to get rid of them? Some of our friends suggest, as if that was some magic remedy, nationalization all round or a reduction of higher salaries, etc. Except for a few, salaries are not high in India now. Where possible, we should try to reduce them. But merely to distribute poverty does not mean progress. In order to go ahead, we have to

try to maintain some standards somewhere. That does not mean affluence for some and poverty for the rest, still less does it mean vulgar display which unfortunately is still rather common with a few of our people. As for nationalization, the real test is how far this adds to our productive capacity as well as to the smoother working of our Plan. Mere nationalization does not add to that productive capacity much, if at all. It might indeed mean a lessening of it. At the most it means a transfer of ownership with the same production and the available resources being utilized for compensation. It is far better to use our resources for new State enterprises, leaving the old ones to carry on as they are, subject to some kind of control by the State. Thus production grows and the public sector grows till it becomes the dominant sector.

The problems of today in India or elsewhere cannot be solved by some purely academic approach or by a dogmatic creed of yesterday. Most of us, I suppose, believe in a socialistic approach and in socialistic ideals. But when these are thought of in terms of some rigid formulae, developed in Europe in the nineteenth century, they need not necessarily apply to India in the middle of the twentieth century. Even economic science is not so static and conditions have changed greatly.

Thus far we see a full-blooded socialism, if that is the right term, working in Communist countries, together with an accompaniment of authoritarian control and an absence of the democratic approach. That is, practically everything is State-controlled and that develops bureaucracy in an extreme measure, apart from suppressing individual freedom. Certain economic results are undoubtedly obtained that way, but the price paid is heavy. In other countries which aim at socialism, though of a different variety, inevitably, there is some kind of a mixed economy, though the quality of the mixture may vary. Indeed, I am inclined to think that in a democratic

society, a so-called mixed economy is inevitable, though the public sector may grow and be the dominant partner. The private sector however will continue to have an important place, but the major industries would tend to be in the public sector. We have laid down that in a planned economy the private sector has to conform to the national plan and therefore has to be controlled to some extent. That appears to be obvious if we are to have any planning. But this leads to a difficulty. The private sector has a different outlook and approach and cannot easily function if there is too much control. It thus ceases to have the advantages attaching to the public sector as well as to the private sector. The other day some industrialists came to see me and said that they would be very happy to co-operate fully with the Five Year Plan. But it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to function effectively with so many restrictions and controls. It was better they said, that an industry was taken over by the public sector completely than left in a hamstrung condition in the private sector. These people exaggerated somewhat, but I think there was some truth in what they said. It is better to take over an industry in the public sector and organize it as such and to allow the industries left to the private sector some freedom of movement, subject of course to some basic considerations. I am mentioning these matters to you so that we might have give thought to them.

As for our resources, it is clear that we have to depend essentially on our country and our own people. We can welcome help from abroad, but it cannot take us far. I have a feeling that we have enough in this country provided we can reach it. The difficulty is that it is spread out and not easily accessible. We have, of course, the small savings scheme and this is important and should be encouraged. But perhaps some additional approach would bring in larger resources at our disposal. If we had a large number of rural banks, they would not only serve as agencies for giving credit to the farmer, and thus

replacing the old *bania*, but they would also attract small pools of money which, in the aggregate, may amount to a very big sum.

*From a letter dated 28 September 1953*

Planning has now become inevitable and even the ardent exponents of private enterprise in the United States of America have been compelled to accept planning, more especially in underdeveloped countries. But the question still remains: what kind of planning and what are the ultimate objectives to be aimed at? It is admitted now that Governments, even in the so-called capitalist countries, have not only to plan, but have to extend governmental functions. Private enterprise becomes more and more hedged in by State enterprise, and even that private enterprise is controlled and powerfully affected by State action. The nineteenth century idea of private enterprise has faded away completely, and there has been a dramatic shift in Western countries towards governmental control. The world capital market no longer exists, and world trade is restricted and managed and controlled in a variety of ways.

If planning is inevitable, what do we plan for? What kind of picture of society do we have in view? There is much argument and a great deal of passion spent in discussing these problems. Some people, notably in the U.S.A., want to divide the world into Communist and non-Communist. That is a simplification which has little justification either in politics or economics. There are many gradations between the two. Apart from a few countries, the general approach of socialism is accepted. We have what is called communist socialism or social democracy. But, on the whole, the final picture of both is not very different, though the approach and the methods employed certainly differ. In India, most progressive groups, and certainly the Congress, have talked of socialism in

more or less precise terms for the last thirty years or more. We have thought of it more in terms of social democracy, keeping in view the special characteristics and outlook of India. The Congress, as a great national movement struggling for political freedom, drew into its fold various groups with differing economic ideologies. But the dominant approach and objective was that of social democracy. There is no essential difference in this respect between the Congress and the Socialist Party in India, except that the socialists tend to be rigid and doctrinaire. They called themselves some kind of Marxists, although they are bitterly opposed to Communists. . . .

Ultimately, any kind of progress, including economic progress, depends on the desire of the people for that progress and the social structure in which they live. Is that structure—political, social, economic, legal, etc.—favourable to such progress or does it impede it? The great era of material progress in Europe and America came when the old belief, encouraged by religion, in a predetermined fate, gave place to a belief in man's power to control his environment and to change it. This was the spread of the modern scientific outlook. Such a background helps change and progress. If, on the other hand, a people believe in fate, in predetermination, in the effect of the stars on our activities, in astrology and the like, obviously the urge to progress and change is not there. The atmosphere is not favourable to it. I am not, for the moment, interested in decrying the virtues, such as there might be, of astrology. I am merely saying that this mental approach is not conducive to creating an atmosphere which vitalizes human beings and brings about change. Take again our general caste outlook or cow protection. All these may have some virtues, but they are uncertain factors. Caste petrifies society, prevents the mobility of labour and the change of occupations. Cow protection, oddly enough, leads to the lack of protection of the cow. In India

cattle protection and the improvement of breeds of cattle are of great importance. But progress can only be made if we approach this scientifically and constructively and not in some negative and narrow-minded spirit. . . .

In any State, and more especially in a democratic State, the psychological appeal to the people is important. They have to feel that they are partners in the great enterprise of running the State machine, and that they are sharers in both the benefits and the obligations. The test of democracy is to create this sensation among the people. It was thought that elections under adult suffrage were adequate for this purpose. They go some way. But in a swiftly moving scene, something more is necessary than mere elections at stated intervals. In planning, especially, this sensation has to be created so that the people may feel that the plan is something that has been evolved with their co-operation and that they are responsible for its success. It was inevitable that in the first attempt planning had to begin somewhere at the top. Even so, there was, as is well known, a great deal of consultation. In future we should evolve some method of making the smallest unit in the village feel that it is consulted in regard to its particular problems and is thus helping in evolving or in varying the plan. This is still more necessary in implementing the plan. The official approach, though necessary, is not enough and has to be linked with this non-official approach and widespread attempt at cooperation. We have now in most States vast numbers of panchayats. If these panchayats could be drawn into the network of planning and its implementation, that would bring the plan to the doorstep of the villager.

Democracy has meant political equality. It means also a progressive economic equality. Our professed aims are to develop a society where there are no great differences and where opportunity comes to all.

Any vested interests and vested privileges do not fit in with such a plan of society. And yet, even our Constitution and more so our economic and social structure and customs, protect many kinds of privilege and vested interest. There is some justification for them in the context of history, but we must always remember that they are anachronisms and the constant irritants to the people. In an economic sense, they might not make much difference, but they create an atmosphere of conflict and frustration and thus come in the way of our work. I have no doubt that these relics of old privilege will have to go. The question is whether we have the wisdom, as a people, to solve this problem peacefully and co-operatively.

*From a letter dated 1 December 1953*

I have just been reading some letters of Thomas Paine. You will remember that Thomas Paine was not only a man of letters but a person who played as important part both in the great French Revolution and in the American Revolution. In a letter dated January 1783, written in America, he said:—

> It would perhaps be quite as well were we to talk less about our independence, and more about our union. For, if the union is justly started, our independence is made secure. The former is the mother, the latter the infant at her breast. The nourishment of the one is drawn through the other, and to improverish the mother is famishing her offspring.
>
> Is there a country in the world that has so many openings to happiness as this? Masters of the land, and proprietors of the Government, unchained from the evils of foreign subjection, and respected by sovereign powers, we have only to deserve prosperity, and its attainment is sure.

But it ever was and probably ever will be the unfortunate disposition of some men to encumber business with difficulties. The natural cast of their mind is to contention; and whatever is not to their particular wish, or their immediate interest, is sure to be magnified with infinite calamities, and exhibited in terror. Such men can see the fate of empires in the snuff of a candle, and an eternity of public ruin wrapt up in every trifling disappointment to themselves. They build their hopes of popularity on error and accident; and subsist by flattering the mistakes and bewildering the judgement of others, still unable to discover the truth or unwilling to confess it, they run into new inconsistencies, or retreat in angry discontent.

These words, written soon after the thirteen States of North America became independent, have some bearing on us today.

*From a letter dated 5 August 1954*

The whole policy of land reform, apart from removing the burden on the actual tiller, was to spread the income from land more evenly among the peasantry and thus giving them more purchasing power. In this way, the internal market would expand and the productive forces of the country would grow. We cannot go on increasing our production unless we increase our consumption. We cannot increase our consumption unless there is the wherewithal to buy among large numbers of people. . . .

We are making a determined effort to improve our rural population through our community development and national extension service schemes. . . . The progress is, I think, deeper and more wide-spread than is imagined. But that progress itself requires something more both in regard to land and in regard to the

development of small industry. It requires more purchasing power to be thrown to the people by such means as may be at our disposal. Mere technological progress by itself will not help, although it is very necessary.

Our land legislation was based on certain theoretical approaches as well as such data as we possessed. That data was wholly inadequate. It became clear that any organized and methodical approach to this problem must now be based on fuller particulars and data. . . .

There appear to be two developments on the land which have resulted from our legislation and which are obviously producing results which we did not aim at. One is the conversion, in some places, of the old rent-collecting landlord into some kind of a farm operator or a capitalist farmer. Often enough, he continues to be an absentee farmer sometimes engaged in other occupations in cities. But, by some device of having a relative or other connected with the farm, he continues to hold on to it. Another curious development is what is called cooperatives in farms. These so-called cooperatives have nothing to do with the cooperative system. They are really partnerships of some farmers.

It seems to me that the right aim for us on land must be to make the actual cultivator the owner. Further that a number of cultivators join together for real cooperative purposes both in field work and in subsequent operations. The form of these cooperatives might vary and it is not necessary to be rigid about them. The first process of the removal of all intermediaries and the cultivator becoming the owner will produce a psychological change and will have some definite practical advantages also. The second process of cooperative farming will help in bringing about greater production through advantage being taken of better methods.

*From a letter dated 15 September 1954*

The first question that arises, of course, is the objective, that is, the social objective that we are aiming at. That aim is not likely to be reached in five years or even ten years or more. But we should be clear about it because only then can we take the necessary steps in that direction. I take it that our objective is to have ultimately a socialist economy. I am not using the word in any doctrinaire sense, but in its broad meaning. That economy as well as any planning requires an organized approach based on adequate data with definite targets. It requires various kinds of controls at least at strategic points. It is clear that we cannot proceed along authoritarian lines, such as in the Soviet Union or even as in China. The problem for us, therefore, is how far we can achieve our objective through democratic planning without too much compulsion. It may be that this kind of planning does not yield those spectacular results which might be obtained by an authoritarian approach to this question and a great deal of compulsion. Even so, we prefer the democratic approach because of certain values and standards we cherish. But even that approach is only adequate if it take us to the goal we aim at.

We must remember that the major examples of authoritarian planning that we know of have proceeded from very big upsets, such as in the Soviet Union and China, and a complete shattering of the old system. Also from the fact that the Soviet Union was largely cut off from the rest of the world for two or three decades and was thus compelled to rely on itself. They paid a very heavy price in suffering but they did succeed in achieving what they were aiming at. In China also, the position was a very special one after several decades of civil war, etc. We have to face a different situation in India. Nevertheless, we can profit by much that has been done

in the Soviet Union as well as in China, without adopting all their methods and policies.

The comparison with the Soviet Union and China is in some ways more helpful to us than the comparison with Western industrialized countries. We have to think in terms of an under-industrialized and under-developed country and the problems in such countries are different from those in the Western industrialized countries.

I am convinced that anywhere, and more especially in India, the peaceful democratic approach is the best in the long run. In India, I would say it is the best even in the short run because any other approach would lead to conflicts and great friction and this comes in the way of constructive work. Therefore, our approach has to be on these lines, but our ideal has to be a socialist economy. Meanwhile, we have to work for greater production as well as greater employment and the two have to be linked together. We have also to remember that we cannot rely too much on external help . . . foreign investments can be accepted in the measure they fit into the framework of the Plan and do not imply excessive financial obligations. In addition to this, of course, there is the political aspect. Foreign aid brings political complications and ultimately perhaps a measure of economic control. The question, therefore, arises about our capacity for saving and investments, this investment being not primarily based on the profit motive but in our fulfilling the demands of our Plan.

There is one aspect which is of great importance and that is our having an adequate supply of trained personnel. Unless we have these trained people for all the various activities that we wish to take up, our progress will stop. Training takes time, sometimes years. We have, therefore, to train our people in sufficient numbers from now onwards so that they can be available as our Plan develops. We have paid some attention to this already, but I fear it has not been enough. We shall require hundreds of thousands of such trained

people. In order to find out approximately the numbers necessary in the various sectors of our national economy, we cannot make just a wild guess. We have to approach this question, as others, from the expert statistical point of view. . . .

We have been talking and writing about planning for the last three years or so and we have made the country planning-conscious. That is a gain. But I sometimes doubt if many of us, whether at the Centre or in the States, have fully appreciated the vital necessity of planning and the statistics necessary for it. Indeed, sometimes there is criticism of the Planning Commission as if it came in the way of our other work. I think that one of the biggest things we have done during the past few years is to develop this planning habit. It may be said that we have been rather slow about it. Perhaps that is so. But in the context of India, this vast and varied country, I think that we have made some impression and laid the foundations of future work. It is now up to us to proceed at a fast pace. That can only be done if we recognize the necessity of planning and cooperate with it to the fullest extent. When I say planning, I do not mean just a list of programmes, projects, and priorities but rather what is called real planning.

*From a letter dated 24 December 1954*

You will have observed that the Lok Sabha, in considering the economic policy resolution, passed almost unanimously an amendment laying down that the pattern of society to be aimed at should be socialistic. This does not mean our adherence to any rigid of doctrinaire pattern, but it does mean that, broadly speaking, we are aiming at a particular type of society where there will be an approach to equality and where the State owns or controls the means of production. This does not mean that the State should own everything, but it must own or control all the strategic points. There has frequently been an argument about

the public and private sectors. That argument discloses somewhat different approaches to the problem. But the argument by itself, without relation to actualities, tends to become unrealistic. It is far better for us to consider these matters from the practical point of view of increasing production and decreasing unemployment and, at the same time, going firmly towards that pattern of society which we aim at. We have to take into consideration all the time the present situation in the country and take advantage of every factor that helps. In this present situation, I have no doubt that the private sector can help considerably and therefore should be allowed, and even encouraged, to help within the broad limits of our planning and general control.

Another aspect of this question which is often argued is that of nationalization of existing industries. The Socialist Party lays the greatest stress upon this, as if it was the solvent of all our ills. Our own policy has been repeatedly declared. With limited resources, there is absolutely no point in our applying them merely to acquire State control over existing industries, except when this is considered necessary. It is far better to apply these existing resources in new plants which are so much needed. Those new plants can be owned by the State.

We want to take advantage of all types of initiative and enterprise in the country. We are not sufficiently developed to be able to rely on a State pattern entirely. Also, there is some advantage in having a kind of competition between the public sector and the private. This will keep the public sector up to the mark. There can be no doubt the public sector has to grow and will dominate the scene.

Many people are anxious to see the rapid growth of the public sector. Some even talk about ending private sector and industry. But, oddly enough, where the public sector is functioning today, there is constant criticism, even in regard to small matters. A proposal was made the other day to have a statutory committee in Parliament to

supervise the public sector. The proposal was rightly rejected. If the public sector is to function effectively, it has to be given freedom and initiative. Otherwise, it will become a routine Government Department with all the checks and delays which are connected with a Department's working. One cannot have it both ways. It is for this reason that we decided long ago to have our major State enterprises in the form of autonomous corporations so that there is no day to day interference with their work.

*From a letter dated 27 September 1955*

What is worrying me greatly is the rapid and progressive decline in our educational standards. It is really astonishing how these standards are falling, and if this process goes on, it simply means that we shall become a third-rate nation, in spite of our efforts in other directions. This decline is obvious in the new entrants in our universities as well as those who appear for our public examinations. Even such universities as took pride in their high standards in the past are now on the downgrade. Many of our teachers do not impress at all. Research is almost non-existent among the teachers. Some of them, indeed, are much too busy in manoeuvring and canvassing for some position or in indulging in politics in the universities. We can hardly blame the students when the teachers themselves act in this way.

Many causes have probably led to this deterioration. One of them appears to be that students who go to universities are hardly capable of understanding lectures or of writing correctly in any language. The shift-over from English to Hindi or any other Indian language has, for the time being at least, resulted in ignorance of every language. The kind of English that is written is deplorable. Indeed, it is not English at all. Hindi is not adequately known, except perhaps in some of the Hindi-speaking States.

The result of all this is bound to be an ignorant generation with just a smattering of knowledge. Quite apart from the literary and cultural aspects, it is clear that, in regard to many of the essential subjects for our progress, we shall be unable to find competent men. In our five year plan, the main difficulty is going to be the lack of trained personnel. In specialized subjects we may give them some elementary training but for any higher training a good knowledge is necessary in some foreign language. We have no adequate books in our Indian languages for science, technology, engineering, economics, medicine, defence, and a number of other subjects. We should, of course, try to produce these books, but books cannot easily be produced to order, and translations are seldom satisfactory. Anyhow, we can hardly translate hundreds and thousands of technical books. No one can do scientific work properly without knowing more than one foreign language. This applies to many other subjects too. In fact, normally, an educated person in Europe is supposed to know fairly well two or three languages and to be able to read some more. . . .

I am not referring here to the unfortunate fact that the administration of our universities has also weakened considerably. We are constantly up against conflicts, demonstrations and political tussles both among the teachers and the students. I think this is largely due to the lower standards of the teachers or the administrators. After all, it is the teacher that makes the pupil. There is another possibility which fills me with concern. These new developments in our teaching are likely to lessen the bond of unity in India and to separate each linguistic area from the other. That is a serious consideration.

*From a letter dated 14 October 1956*

It is no easy matter to define socialism precisely, for socialists themselves differ in their definitions. I do not propose to enter into

this rather complicated question in this letter, but I should like to point out some broad considerations which we should have in view. Some people think that socialism means an egalitarian society, that is, equality for everybody and nothing more. Socialism certainly aims at a removal of differences and equal opportunities for all. But socialism is much more than this. The very word came into use after the industrial revolution had ushered in modern capitalism. It was in fact a child, as capitalism was, of the industrial revolution which for the first time rapidly increased the productive apparatus of society and therefore added greatly to the available wealth. For the first time in human history the prospect of a measure of well-being for everybody came into view and various theories were advanced how to achieve it. Marx studied the early days of capitalism with remarkable insight and prophesied that there would be progressively an accumulation of wealth in ever fewer hands and greater misery for ever larger numbers of people. This would ultimately result in a revolution ushering in the Communist era. Indeed, he expected this revolution to take place every time there was some crisis in capitalism.

Marx has been proved right in his analysis in many ways, but he has also been proved wrong in other ways. Capitalism has survived and prospered and even resulted in much higher standards for the industrialized communities of the West. But it is true that the new stage of capitalism, though markedly different from the old stage, bears out the Marxian analysis in so far as it is leading to big monopolies. In the highly industrialized countries a few huge combines have developed and wield enormous power. The main argument in favour of private enterprise was that it encouraged large-scale competition. With the development of these monopolies, the sphere of competition becomes lesser and lesser and the self-regulating character of the old competitive economy ceases to function.

In spite of this growth of monopoly capitalism, to some extent capitalism has been kept in check by two developments which were not before Marx. One is the development of democratic government leading to adult franchise; the other is the development of powerful trade unions in the industrialized countries. Both these have helped in improving the standards of the common man and in checking the predatory character of capitalism. Thus, while capitalism has undergone a considerable change, the conception of socialism also has to be adapted to new conditions. So long as private monopolies remain, it is not possible for any socialist structure of society to develop. It becomes essential, therefore, for society to control the major means of production and to prevent these monopolies from developing. And yet, the very nature of capitalism, aided by continuing technological progress, is to develop these monopolies.

Another aspect which is to be borne in mind is the terrific pace of technological growth and the release of new sources of power, finally culminating in atomic energy. While it was bad enough for monopoly capitalism to wield great influence previously, and in fact to grow bigger and bigger, the prospect of this new source of power being controlled by it brings grave dangers.

The result of all this is that even in the highly industrialized countries capitalism, while changing considerably, has reached a stage of monopoly utilizing the latest technology to increase its power to a degree which might in future endanger society as a whole. In India, the position is not so developed and is different. It would be folly for us to pursue a path which leads to these dangers and deadlocks.

We have, I think, adopted a wise course in trying to keep this basic factor in view and yet allowing private enterprise to develop in the secondary fields which are not of strategic importance. Gradually the public sector will grow both absolutely and relatively, and the whole

economy of the country will be controlled by it. It is interesting to compare what is happening in a number of other countries in Asia, more especially Western Asia, with what we have done in India. Very large sums of money have been given to these countries as aid or as profit from oil production. These sums have been spent in some improvements, some development of light industries and an increasing consumption of consumer goods. There has been no basic change in the general level of the people. Nor has any foundation been laid for any future progress. In effect these large sums have been largely wasted. We must learn from this.

*From a letter dated 1 August 1957*

I would repeat that the keystone of our planning is agricultural production. We can never have surpluses for industrial growth unless these come from agriculture. If, on the other hand, we have deficits in our food production, then instead of the surplus which would add to our strength, we have a process of corrosion of even the strength that we possess. I think that it is realized now how important this question is. But I have still a feeling that it is not realized adequately. It was with great difficulty that we raised our target of food production for the second Five Year Plan . . .

Next to food production, the question of the price of foodgrains is thus of vital importance. Indeed, the two are intimately connected. If the prices of foodgrains go up, then the whole fabric of our planning suffers irretrievably. That does not mean that we should make the poor farmer suffer. It means that we must give him a fair price, and no more, and that we should put an end to profiteering by middlemen. How can we keep the price of foodgrains at reasonable levels? The only course appears to be to have a large stock of foodgrains available at every time, and even be prepared for natural calamities, floods,

droughts, etc. That has been our objective for a long time. But, we have failed to achieve it. It is not possible to maintain large stocks of foodgrains if the Government has to buy them in the open market. It is well known that the moment Government goes into the open market, prices shoot up. The only other course, therefore, is for Government purchases of foodgrains to take place compulsorily at fixed and reasonable prices. . . .

Whether in food production or in many other matters, we have attached, as you know, the greatest importance to the community development programme. That programme embodies something more than higher production. It is the outcome of a certain philosophy and it depends upon faith in our people and their capacity to make good, given the opportunity. If our people and that means ultimately our vast rural population, cannot make good, then all our planning is futile. Democracy means faith in the people plus, no doubt, many other things. The community development programme is meant to develop self-reliance, self-respect and co-operation among the people. It has been criticized much, and the criticisms are often true. Nevertheless, it is, I believe, the biggest thing that we are doing in India and the biggest hope for our future. That hope lies not merely in some material advance, but rather in the building up of the people who, then, will be capable of advancing themselves.

It is the philosophy underlying co-operation that is behind the whole community development movement. This movement, as it grows, will include almost every activity in that area, affecting even the governmental structure. We have always thought of the community development movement having its basis in the village panchayat and the village cooperative—the administrative and economic sides of village life.

I find, however, that there is some confusion about the kind of cooperative movement that we should have. My own idea has always

been that a cooperative should be non-official. It must develop the people's capacity and teach them to rely on themselves. Also, that a cooperative must be some kind of a larger family, that is there should be intimate relations among the members of the cooperative. If it is too large, then that intimacy is lost. If it is officialized, then the element of self-reliance and self-growth is lost. A cooperative is not just a credit-giving institution or a bank. It is, or should be, something with life and spirit in it, drawing its sustenance from its members and giving back something to them. This is the philosophical approach.

*From a letter dated 13 July 1958*

The old civilizations, with the many virtues that they possess, have obviously proved inadequate. The new Western civilization, with all its triumphs and achievements and also with its atomic bombs, also appears inadequate and, therefore, the feeling grows that there is something wrong with our civilization. Indeed, essentially our problems are those of civilization itself. Religion gave a certain moral and spiritual discipline; it also tried to perpetuate superstition and social usages. Indeed, those superstitions and social usages enmeshed and overwhelmed the real spirit of religion. Disillusionment followed. Communism comes in the wake of this disillusionment and offers some kind of faith and some kind of discipline. To some extent it fills a vacuum. It succeeds in some measure by giving content to man's life. But in spite of its apparent success, it fails, partly because of its rigidity, but, even more so, because it ignores certain essential needs of human nature. There is much talk in communism of the contradictions of capitalist society and there is truth in that analysis. But we see the growing contradictions within the rigid framework of communism itself. Its suppression of individual freedom brings about powerful reactions. Its contempt for what might be called the

moral and spiritual side of life not only ignores something that is basic in man, but also deprives human behaviour of standards and values. Its unfortunate association with violence encourages a certain evil tendency in human beings.

I have the greatest admiration for many of the achievements of the Soviet Union. Among these great achievements is the value attached to the child and to the common man. There the systems of education and health are probably the best in the world. But it is said, and rightly, that there is suppression of individual freedom there. And yet the spread of education in all its forms is itself a tremendous liberating force which ultimately will not tolerate that suppression of freedom. This again is another contradiction. Unfortunately, communism became too closely associated with the necessity for violence and thus the ideal which is placed before the world became a tainted one. Means distorted ends. We see here the powerful influence of wrong means and methods.

Communism charges the capitalist structure of society with being based on violence and class conflict. I think this is essentially correct, though that capitalist structure itself has undergone and is continually undergoing a change because of democratic and other forces. Still it is obviously true that there are class struggles and inequality. The question is how to get rid of this and have a classless society with equal opportunities for all. Can this be achieved through methods of violence, or can it be possible to bring about those changes through peaceful methods? Communism has definitely allied itself to the approach of violence. Even if it does not indulge normally in physical violence, its language is of violence, its thought is violent and it does not seek to change by persuasion or peaceful democratic pressures, but by coercion and indeed by destruction and extermination in their grossest forms and, at the same time, it has no acceptable ideal. . . .

Socialism, of course, deliberately wants to interfere with the normal processes and thus not only adds to the productive forces but lessens inequalities. But what is socialism? It is difficult to give a precise answer and there are innumerable definitions of it. Some people probably think of socialism vaguely just as something which does good and which aims at equality. That does not take us very far. Socialism is basically a different approach from that of capitalism, though I think it is true that the wide gap between them tends to lessen because many of the ideas of socialism are gradually incorporated even in the capitalist structure. Socialism is after all not only a way of life but a certain scientific approach to social and economic problems. If socialism is introduced in a backward and under-developed country, it does not suddenly make it any less backward. In fact, we then have a backward poverty-stricken socialism.

Unfortunately many of the political aspects of communism have tended to distort our vision of socialism. Also the technique of struggle evolved by communism has given violence a predominant part. Socialism should, therefore, be considered apart from these political elements or the inevitability of violence. It tells us that the general character social, political and intellectual life in a society is governed by its productive resources. As those productive resources change and develop, so the life and thinking of the community changes. . . .

It has to be remembered that is not by some magic adoption of socialist or capitalist method that poverty suddenly leads to riches. The only way is through hard work and increasing the productivity of the nation and organizing an equitable distribution of its products. It is a lengthy and difficult process. In a poorly developed country, the capitalist method offers no chance. It is only through a planned approach on socialistic lines that steady progress can be attained

though even that will take time. As this process continues, the texture of our life and thinking gradually changes.

Planning is essential for this because otherwise we waste our resources which are very limited. Planning does not mean a mere collection of projects or schemes, but a thought-out approach of how to strengthen the base and pace of progress so that the community advances on all fronts. In India we have a terrible problem of extreme poverty in certain large regions, apart from the general poverty of the country. We have always a difficult choice before us; whether to concentrate on production by itself in selected and favourable areas, and thus for the moment rather ignoring the poor areas, or try to develop the backward areas at the same time, so as to lessen the inequalities between regions. A balance has to be struck and an integrated national plan evolved. That national plan need not and indeed should not have rigidity. It need not be based on any dogma; but should rather take the existing facts into consideration. It may and, I think, in present-day India it should, encourage private enterprise in many fields, though even that private enterprise must necessarily fit in with the national plan and have such controls as are considered necessary.

*From a letter dated 4 August 1960*

You will no doubt have seen the draft outline of our third Five Year Plan. We shall gladly receive comments and suggestions about it and, no doubt, we shall have them. But, broadly speaking, the problem before us is not so much to lay down high policies, but to implement them. We must realize that we have not always succeeded in implementing what we have laid down. Thus, in land reform, the progress in implementation has been slow. And yet, this is in a sense the very foundation of our agricultural progress. I would beg of you,

therefore, to direct all your attention to the implementation of the plans that we draw up.

A great deal of attention is directed to industrial growth, and that is as it should be. But the fact remains that the whole future of our Plan, and indeed even of industrial growth, depends on agricultural progress. We all know what exactly should be done in agriculture in order to increase production. And yet, much remains to be done. . . .

The background of agricultural progress is land reform, the establishment and proper functioning of *panchayat samitis* with adequate powers, and service cooperatives. I need not add that a cooperative should be a real cooperative and not something on paper. There are many such paper cooperatives today in the country which miss the essence of co-operation. Co-operation to succeed must be based on non-official work and guidance. It will never go far if it hangs on to officials and is constantly looking up to them. Indeed, I am convinced that in many of our other activities also we should rely more and more on non-official effort.

The whole purpose of *panchayat samitis* is to shift this burden on to non-officials and develop their own initiative and sense of responsibility. Where this has been done a marked change is already taking place.

*From a letter dated 27 June 1961*

Our third Five Year Plan is an attempt to raise the general level and to infuse our life with the modern spirit of science and technology. Science and technology, with all the good they have done, have also increased tremendously the capacity for destruction. The fact, however, remains that if we are to succeed in producing an integrated world, as we must, if we are to avoid total destruction,

these will come about now only through the growth of science and technology.

This does not apply to the world only but to our own country also. Our problems of poverty and under-development, of unemployment and very low standards can only be solved through the growth of science and technology in this country. Let us go a little further. Our present difficulties with various disruptive tendencies, whether they are based on provincialism or communalism or linguism or caste, are all the consequences of backward social conditions. We try to solve these problems created by these disruptive tendencies from day to day as best as we can. But the real solution lies in the widespread application of science and technology with its inevitable companion, education.

We must realize the basic fact that we live in an age of social revolution and our problems are the conflict between a traditional society and the new temper of the age. In this context it becomes exceedingly important for us to bring about this social revolution as rapidly as possible. The objective of the Five Year Plan is to produce this change.

That does not mean that we should ignore these disruptive tendencies and allow them to lapse or fade away when the social revolution is more or less complete. We have to fight on all fronts, but in doing so we must realize that the basic remedy is to bring about these economic and social changes. Meanwhile, we must avoid and we oppose these disruptive tendencies. Just as in the wider world we stand on the threshold of vast progress because of the development of science and technology, provided we escape the scourge of war, so also in India we stand on the frontier of a new land, provided we escape these tremendous dangers due to our social backwardness. . . .

We have laid down socialism or the socialist pattern of society as our objective. We shall not achieve it quickly because it is a

mighty task to create that society in a backward, undeveloped and traditionally-minded country of more than 400 million people. But whatever we may do or plan, we should always keep that objective in view and judge every step accordingly. Some groups and parties oppose this objective of planning in a straightforward way, others talk glibly of socialism, probably without understanding it and certainly without meaning it. Those who oppose this broad socialistic approach and our planning represent complete reaction. Their coming out in the open is a sign of the growth of the nation because it helps to clear up issues. They will have no chance with the public of India because they are going against the whole country, against India's life and urges. But they sometimes succeed in creating a measure of confusion in our minds. In fact, our chief difficulty has been from a lack of clarity in our thinking.

The second difficulty and an even more important one is lack of proper implementation of our plans. It is generally recognized now, even by our critics in India or abroad, that we plan well and we lay down the most excellent of principles. The difficulty comes in implementation. Attention therefore has to be directed in future to this business of implementation and carrying out what we have laid down in our plans, whether in agriculture and *panchayati raj* and cooperatives, or in small and big industry. The public undertakings that we have set up are great achievements, but they have been described by an eminent authority as 'post office socialism.'*

What does this mean? I am not quite sure. But, broadly, I think it means that we look upon them as we look upon the post office which should balance its income and expenditure. That is not good

* John Kenneth Galbraith on his visit to India in 1959 had described public enterprises, which 'operated at no profit, hopefully no loss, with no particular efficiency and with no clear purpose in mind', as post office socialism.

enough. The purpose of the public undertakings is to help us in increasing our resources. The profits that normally would have gone to private owners should come into the public exchequer and add to the funds available for further investment. It is of the utmost importance that this should be done and this indeed is the test of success of any public undertaking. The old idea that profit-making is a private concern and not a public concern has to be discarded completely. Our public enterprises have to be run with the greatest efficiency and the greatest profit.

# IV

# WAR AND PEACE

'It is well known that we are not war-mongers and we are more devoted to peace than any other country or people. We shall avoid war because war is a frightful thing and comes in the way of progress and leaves bitter trails behind it. But events follow one another in quick succession and our patience is tried to the utmost.'

From the unfinished accession of Jammu and Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh at Independence to the China War in 1962, Nehru's term involved the use of military power on several occasions. Although Nehru's strategic thought is often criticized for being naive and weak, the following excerpts capture both aspects of his realism and reasons for his aversion to war. Covering the consistently tense relationship with Pakistan to the gradually worsening one with China, these excerpts show Nehru agonize over the dangerous repercussions of war and its potential for 'universal destruction'. War was a poor solution to any conflict, and Nehru held military action to be sometimes necessary but always an instrument of last resort. We also see Nehru invariably turn towards the potential global implications of any armed clash, recognizing how it would shape and be shaped by international currents.

*From a letter dated 5 February 1948*

The Kashmir issue in the Security Council has given us a great deal of trouble. The military situation has not changed much. But I must confess that the attitude of the great powers has been astonishing. Some of them have shown active partisanship for Pakistan. . . . the

Kashmir question is not being discussed fairly and . . . considerable pressure is being brought to bear against India. This is another heavy burden which we have to bear. Our experience of international politics and the way things are done in these higher regions of the United Nations has been disappointing in the extreme. No doubt, all this will affect our international relations in the future. I might inform you that while we have tried and shall continue to try to have a peaceful settlement, we have no intention whatever of giving in on the fundamental points. We cannot betray the Kashmir people who have put their trust in us, and we cannot surrender to gangsterism.

*From a letter dated 20 February 1948*

[D]iplomatically, we have reached almost a crisis over the Kashmir issue. Our delegation to the Security Council has just returned and I have been engaged in consultations with them. They have had to contend against exceptional difficulties in New York and I think they have done a very good piece of work, particularly Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who has shown great firmness combined with balance and dignity. All that he, Shri Setalvad and Sheikh Abdullah have told me have confirmed the impression which I conveyed to you in my last letter that the great powers have shown active partisanship. One can only speculate on the reasons for this attitude, but so far as I can gather, quite a variety of factors, not one of them connected with the merits of the Kashmir issue, seem to have led to this development. The Americans who voted for the partition of Palestine and thereby alienated the sympathies of the Arabs seem anxious to win back Arab support which is essential for them in view of the oil situation, and the possibility of war in the Middle East. They are, therefore, openly, and with very little finesse, supporting Pakistan. The United Kingdom, so far as the Muslim countries are concerned, seems to

be in much the same position as the U.S.A.; moreover, she is heavily dependent on the United States for economic resources. There seems, too, to be a fear in the minds of the Western Powers that if Pakistan founders through internal weakness, the situation might be exploited by Soviet Russia to the serious detriment of U.S.A. and U.K. I have also heard, curiously enough, that there is some apprehension at the fact that India, which is rapidly consolidating herself politically by the integration of provinces and states, is becoming a powerful factor in Asia and this development is not favoured. But whether these reasons are wholly responsible or not for the attitude of the great powers, clearly we must reckon with indifference and some degree of hostility on their part towards us. So far as Russia is concerned, she seems to be merely watching the position at present; and no doubt she would eventually play her hand as it suits her own interest. She has shown, I am told, more understanding of our position than the other countries in the Security Council, but she is in a cleft stick because she has taken, in Greece and Korea, a line which is inconsistent with support to our case in Kashmir. On the other hand, the policy of the U.S.A. in Greece and Korea does not fit in at all with the line they have so far taken up in regard to Kashmir. In any case, it is clear that the achievement of independence and a desire to maintain our own foreign relations, free of attachment to blocs, has brought us sharply against the ugly forces of power politics. We must not get discouraged, however. The Cabinet will carefully consider the whole Kashmir issue in the light of the present international context; and in as much as any decision we may take is likely to have effects on the internal political situation.

*From a letter dated 15 April 1948*

Hyderabad had become an even more vital issue than it has been chiefly because of the activities of the Ittehad-ul-Muslemeen and

their volunteer corps, the Razakars, who have spread terror in the towns and rural areas of the state. The President of the Ittehad has been delivering amazingly irresponsible speeches and the situation is deteriorating greatly. It has been the Government of India's policy to seek a peaceful settlement even though there might be some delay in this, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain passive while all these developments are taking place inside; and on the borders of Hyderabad state. As I write this, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad has again come to Delhi and I do not know what the outcome of our talks will be. Our position has been and is that the people of Hyderabad cannot continue to live under an authoritarian and feudal regime, which is becoming increasingly violent and oppressive and which threatens the lives and property of the great majority of the population. All over India, every state has introduced responsible government in a large measure. Some states have merged into the provinces, some have grouped themselves together to form major units of the Indian Union like the provinces. Some of the big states continue as units but with responsible government. The only exception is Hyderabad where there is no change whatever. I might also mention that the states in the North West, which have acceded to Pakistan, also remain unchanged in their internal administration.

It is manifest that Hyderabad cannot remain as it is, a feudal island in a democratic India. It is equally clear that both geographically and economically, it cannot cut itself adrift from India, nor can a small minority dominate over the large majority.

*From a letter dated 3 August 1948*

What are we going to do about Hyderabad is a question that is frequently asked. I can well understand the impatience and irritation in the country. The way the Nizam's government and the Razakars

have behaved has been scandalous. We have made it clear that not only the old formula is dead and gone but also that we are not going to talk even unless the present government there is changed and the Razakars are banned and suppressed. . . .

All that we can say is that while we do not wish to take any precipitate action and must go forward warily and in full knowledge of all the consequences of any contemplated action, we cannot refrain from action either for very long. Some action is already taking place, economic and other, and this is producing results in spite of the brave words of some members of the Hyderabad government. Further action will undoubtedly be taken unless something happens which changes the situation in Hyderabad. But it must be remembered that every step has to be viewed in the all-India context. No government can forget the whole picture of India in considering one particular part of it. In no event, can we admit the right of Hyderabad to independence. There is no instance in history, so far as I am aware, when a land-locked territory, surrounded on all sides by one State, has become independent. Both in strict law, and in fact, the notion of Hyderabad's independence is a little absurd. . . .

In view of this Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Pakistan situation, it is clear that we cannot allow ourselves to be tied up in secondary matters when, at any moment, a very grave crisis may confront us. I would request provincial governments to keep this picture before their eyes, and to be mentally and otherwise prepared for any possible development. It is well known that we are not war-mongers and we are more devoted to peace than any other country or people. We shall avoid war because war is a frightful thing and comes in the way of progress and leaves bitter trails behind it. But events follow one another in quick succession and our patience is tried to the utmost.

*From a letter dated 8 April 1950*

You have been sent separately copy of the Agreement* that was signed today by me and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. This Agreement deals principally with East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. But generally it concerns itself with the entire minority problem in Pakistan and India.

We met to consider these vital problems at a most critical moment in our country's history. We were, it might be said, hovering on the verge of a precipice. The significance of recent events and the terrible possibilities of the future gave great importance to this meeting. Very great interest has been taken in it in the principal countries of the world. This was so, not because people abroad are interested very much in the fate of millions in India or Pakistan, but because they realized that this was a matter which had the widest international significance.

After seven days of continuous and exhausting discussions we have arrived at an Agreement. It is possible to criticize some items in this Agreement or to suggest that there might have been an improvement here and there. But, it is clear, what counts is not any

* By the Nehru–Liaquat Ali Khan Agreement signed in New Delhi on 8 April 1950, the Governments of India and Pakistan emphasized that the allegiance and loyalty of the minorities was to the state of which they were citizens, and that it was to the government of their own state that they should look for the redress of their grievances. Both governments agreed to ensure complete equality of citizenship to minorities and extend all facilities to migrants from East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. The agreement also provided that each government would set up a commission of inquiry to inquire into and report on the causes and extent of the communal disturbances. In order to help restore confidence, the two governments also decided to depute two ministers, one from each government, to remain in the affected areas for such period as might be necessary, and to constitute separate minority commissions in East Bengal, West Bengal and Assam.

detail in the Agreement but rather the spirit underlying it and the future possibilities. We have crossed a very big hurdle, many hurdles remain. Although we discussed at length recent occurrences in East and West Bengal and Assam, we had all the time before us the basic problem of Indo-Pakistan relations. These have poisoned the air for us for these two years and a half and they had arrived at a stage when a measure of disaster had already overwhelmed us and a far greater disaster seemed imminent. It was the parting of the ways. We went either to this greater disaster or we took a turn in the opposite direction. The Agreement indicates a turn in that opposite direction. I wish to be neither optimistic nor pessimistic about this Agreement and the future will show what its consequences are. But I am quite sure that the mere fact of Agreement and this determined and sincere effort to turn the tide of events in a more hopeful direction is a good thing. It will bring immediate relief to millions of people who have lived or passed through disastrous happenings and for whom the future was terribly dark. That relief itself is something to be grateful for. We get time to consolidate this position and perhaps go some way in the right direction towards solving this most difficult problem.

Whatever the views of any person may be about the merits of particular clauses of the Agreement, the position we have to face, after the Agreement is signed, is clear. Personally, I think the Agreement is definitely a good one from every point of view and that it lays down the foundations of a future settlement. But, in any event, it is something which gives us a handle to work for better ends and it would be unfortunate in the extreme if we do not take full advantage of this. Having come to an Agreement, it should be accepted by all of us in the best of spirit and with a view to making it a living thing. There is no other way and no other alternative, except deliberately to aim at a big-scale conflict with whatever it may bring. There is no half-way house. I take it that almost everyone is agreed

that we should avoid that conflict in so far as we can. If so, then we must of necessity give full support to this Agreement and implement it in letter and spirit.

*From a letter dated 15 April 1950*

Whatever view one might take of the Agreement, one thing seems perfectly clear to me. Sardar Patel, in a very moving speech addressed to the Congress Party last evening, laid great stress on this aspect. This is the fact that having arrived at this Agreement, both our honour and self-interest demand that we should implement it to the full. Not to do so would not only discredit us but harm us greatly. To try to do so half-heartedly would be even worse, because we would get the discredit and no benefit at all. Therefore, even for those people who are not enthusiastic about the Agreement, the only right course is to work for its implementation. It is a relatively small matter whether some item of the Agreement might have been somewhat different or not. The main thing is the spirit underlying it and the effort to translate that spirit into action. If the spirit is absent, either on our side or that of Pakistan, then the Agreement fails. If there is that earnestness of spirit, then it does not matter much if some clause is not as good as it might have been. In the final analysis, this is a test of our faith in ourselves. Some people talk of the bona fides or the lack of it of Pakistan. That certainly is important. But essentially it is a question of our own faith and confidence in ourselves. If we have faith and are true to it, then we can wrest success even out of apparent failure. In other words, there can be no failure except our own failure from this point of view.

This may sound strange to some people, for memories are short, and we have forgotten already many of the lessons that Gandhiji taught us. In those days, which seem so far off now, we measured our

action by our own faith and strength and not by what the opponent did. That opponent was out to check and counter us at every step. The lesson we learnt was that right action always strengthens, even though it might not produce the full result we desire. That right action, in order to produce results, must be based on faith in it and confidence in ourselves. . . .

Before the Agreement was signed, the only real alternative was war. However much we may be opposed to war, unfortunately we cannot, in the present state of the world, rule it out. If we could rule it out, we would keep no army or navy or air force. Therefore, we keep prepared for any such contingency, however distasteful it might be. But let us be clear about the consequences of such a war. Most people, who have talked about it, have probably not realized at all what these consequences are. These consequences are terrible to contemplate. But apart from them, how far would war have solved the immediate problem before us? It is often said that war solves no problems in the modern world, even if it did so in ancient times. It is by no means easy to understand how we would have solved the problem that faces us in India by warlike measures. If we were compelled to resist by war, we would have had little choice and we would have had to accept this dreadful course of action, in spite of our bitter dislike of it. But it would have been a counsel of despair, leading to all kinds of unforeseen and disastrous consequences. So, if any alternative offered itself, we had to seize it. That alternative may not promise us the kind of success that we want; that is a solution of our present-day problems. But even if it takes us some way, it is worthwhile, and there is always the possibility of further advance towards a solution.

For my part, my mind is perfectly clear that we took the right step, both negatively and positively, and that any other step would have been harmful in the extreme. I have repeatedly spoken about this

Agreement and the circumstances that surround it. Whatever I have said has not been, just as politicians say, to try to cover up our errors and find some excuses for our action. It has been the expression of my deeply felt thoughts. All of us had given earnest thought to this difficult situation that we had to face during these few months. Those of us who had the responsibility for decision on these vital issues at a moment of crisis in our history, bore a heavier burden and had to give their full mind and heart to this matter. I firmly believe that we did the right thing and I am equally firm in my belief that we must pursue this to the utmost limit. If it so happens that we fail in our endeavours, that will be our misfortune. But I see no reason why we should fail in spite of all that the pessimists and prophets of evil might say. In any event, the die is cast and we cannot go back. To stand still is folly. We have, therefore, to go ahead and do so with all our strength. We have to save ourselves not only from what Pakistan might do or not do, but also from ourselves. For, as things were, both Pakistan and we were heading straight towards a complete degradation of human behaviour. Out of that degradation, nothing good could come. . . .

We have been accused of appeasement of Pakistan. The word has a bad odour and a bad history. I do not myself see where appeasement comes in, either on the side of the Government or the people. If anything that is not war is appeasement, then perhaps we have appeased. It would be equally true to say that Pakistan has tried to appease us. If an attempt to prevent a reversion to barbarism is appeasement, then perhaps the charge is true. But we learnt long ago in the school of Gandhi that there can be firmness with decency, and even conflict with the hand of friendship never withdrawn. That is not weakness, for if it is so, then Gandhi might be termed weak. And yet we all know that he was the bravest man that we have known and that he would never give in where high principle was concerned. How far we have moved from those days, when a handful of us could

challenge an empire, and challenge it with a smile on our faces and with little of ill will in our hearts! The strength lay in us then, not outside, and so nobody could ultimately defeat us.

*From a letter dated 2 May 1950*

The dominating feature of the past fortnight, as of the fortnight before it, was what might be called the Bengal situation. Everywhere people watched, with varying degrees of hope and apprehension, the results that flowed from the Agreement of 8th April. It is difficult to measure these consequences, though there are some tests which can be applied. One obvious test is that of the exodus. There was, to begin with, a fairly marked falling off in the exodus both ways in Bengal and Assam. Then figures rose again and now there is a tendency for these figures to go down, though not very greatly.

Two contrary forces are at play. One is the increased confidence of people to stay or to return. The other is fear, if not so much of the present, then of the future, and therefore to take advantage of present conditions to migrate. Thus while the Agreement and what has followed certainly bring some measure of confidence, at the same time it facilitates people's migrations, because conditions to do so are much easier and a good deal of moveable property, including jewellery, etc., can be brought over. There is thus a feeling of moving across the border while the going is good. One fact, however, which is not sufficiently publicized, is that a fairly considerable number of Hindus are returning from West Bengal to East Bengal. Thus the latest figures of Hindu migrations from East Bengal to West Bengal are about 12,000 a day. Hindus going back to East Bengal from West Bengal have numbered between 3,000 to 4,000 a day. That is a fairly substantial number, though not much. So far as Muslims are concerned, their exodus is much less from West Bengal than it used

to be. Indeed, the exodus of Muslims from the U.P. and Rajputana to West Pakistan has been almost as big and has caused us a good deal of worry.

There is no doubt that the Agreement and what has followed it have changed the whole atmosphere of India and Pakistan. It has brought immediate relief to millions and a certain glimmering hope for the future. It is also true that Governments on both sides are trying their utmost to implement the Agreement. All the information that has come to me, as well as my personal observation, go to show that the Pakistan Government is determined to implement the Agreement. I was myself witness to a certain measure of popular enthusiasm in Karachi when I visited that city recently. . . .

Whatever the consequences of the Agreement of April 8th, there can be no doubt that it has enhanced our prestige all over the world. It has also given us confidence in ourselves, because we solved the problem with our own unaided efforts and not relying upon a third party. It is very seldom that two countries, inflamed with passion, going to the brink of war, pull themselves up and deliberately walk in a different direction. The real thing that counts ultimately for a people is their inner strength. The processes that were going on before the Agreement were snapping that strength and making us, as they made Pakistan, full of fear and hatred. The mere stopping of those processes is gain enough and strengthens us for further advance in future.

We have many problems to face, but for the present the most important and basic problem is the implementation of the Agreement in spirit and letter. In spirit, I would like to emphasize, because the letter by itself does not help much. The most pleasing feature of the past few weeks has been the psychological change and this is more important than even practical consequences. We have to take advantage of this new situation and not allow it to relapse.

Governments and the machinery of the State can help very greatly in this. They will help only if all of them are imbued with a certain crusading zeal and a firm faith in the principles we stand for.

*From a letter dated 1 November 1950*

There has been a good deal of talk about a plebiscite in Kashmir and, as you know, we agreed to it long ago. For my part, I have little doubt that a really fair plebiscite would result in a majority for Sheikh Abdullah's Government and party and for accession to India. The difficulty has been in regard to conditions governing the plebiscite. If Pakistan had its way, it would convert Kashmir into a field for bitter, violent and most bigoted propaganda on the basis of religion, leading to riots and disorder on a large scale. That is not the kind of plebiscite we have envisaged, and that is why we have laid great stress on the conditions. The U.N. mediator, Dixon, made a proposal which appeared to us astonishing. That proposal amounted to converting the Valley of Kashmir and other parts into a kind of half Pakistan even before the plebiscite. This would naturally have created a powerful psychological reaction and an impression that Pakistan had half come and would fully come a little later. In fact, it would have been the most unfair preparation for a plebiscite and we made it clear that we could not agree to it. The new proposal in the U.N. Security Council to have a committee of non-permanent members of the Council is a curious way of meeting with the situation. All kinds of commissions and inquiries have taken place and now it is proposed that some representatives of South American and other countries, sitting in New York, should take the matter in hand and decide. It is obvious that this can lead to nothing except, perhaps, to entangle us still further in false assumptions and wrong procedure. In our extreme desire to find a peaceful settlement, we have allowed ourselves repeatedly to

get more and more tied up. We have accepted the U.N. resolutions with safeguards and reservations. Those safeguards and reservations have been forgotten or put aside and we are called upon from time to time to act up to the old resolutions, minus reservations. Because of all this, we have come to the conclusion that we cannot permit this drifting and sliding process to go on any longer. The Kashmir issue can only be solved by agreement between the parties concerned and all that an outsider can do is to help in bringing this about. Even that help in the past has not produced any great results. The alternative to such settlement is either war or a continuing stalemate.

We do not, for our part, wish to decide this or any other issue by war. I have declared publicly that we shall not go to war over Kashmir unless we are attacked by Pakistan. I invited the Prime Minister of Pakistan to make a like declaration, but he has hesitated to do so and produced all kinds of irrelevant arguments. Apart from this question of Kashmir, we proposed a general no-war declaration to Pakistan. That too has got stuck up in a lengthy correspondence in which each party's viewpoint is repeatedly emphasized. Our viewpoint is simple: let both countries declare that they will not go to war against each other for the settlement of any dispute and will seek methods of negotiations, mediation, arbitration or reference to some international tribunal. It is clear that arbitration or reference to a tribunal would not apply to certain types of political disputes which are not justiciable. Thus they cannot apply to Kashmir.

*From a letter dated 1 August 1951*

Nothing has surprised me so much during the past months or even years than the deliberate policy pursued by the U.K. and U.S.A. Governments in the Security Council of the U.N. and elsewhere, in regard to Kashmir. I hope I am not entirely incapable of taking

an objective view of the situation. I have tried to do so and I cannot understand why some foreign countries should be so hostile to us in this matter. There must be some basic cause for it, which has little relation to the merits of the dispute. It is clear that long ago the U.K. and U.S.A. Governments came to the conclusion that Kashmir must go to Pakistan. That had nothing to do with the merits of the case. Having come to that conclusion, naturally the policy they have pursued has been meant to further that objective. Why did they start with this premise? If we trace this, perhaps we will have to go back to pre-partition days when the British Government encouraged the Muslim League and separatism in India. We shall also have to go back and try to understand the policy of the U.K., which led them to support feudal and reactionary regimes in the Middle East and sometimes even favour the idea of Pan-Islamism or an Islamic bloc. In the old days, this was against the Czarist Russia. Later, Communist Russia became a major danger. Of course, there was oil in the Middle East and the routes to India and the Far East had to be protected. After the First World War, the whole of the vast area from Afghanistan to Turkey was more or less under British occupation and Mr. Winston Churchill even suggested the creation of a Middle Eastern Empire. But other developments took place. There was the new Soviet Russia, weak and facing a civil war, but nonetheless a power, with a new kind of strength. Kamal Ataturk drove out the allied occupation forces from Turkey and later defeated the Greek Army, which was supported by the British. Raza Shah Pahlavi became dominant in Iran. In the Arab countries, all kinds of new situations arose. Iraq remained largely under British control.

Even so, the attempts to keep some kind of control of the Middle Eastern regions continued. It was little realized by the diplomats and the policy-makers of Western countries that new and powerful forces were rising all over Asia and that they could not be dealt with

in the old way, either by military pressure or financial inducement. It seems astonishing how lacking in awareness Western nations have been and, to some extent, even are today, about these forces. They seem to think that their analysis of the situation is complete when they talk of the Communist danger which must be met. Undoubtedly, Communist expansion must be met. But it cannot be met adequately with the support of reactionary and feudal regimes. It is there that European and American policies have failed. The U.S. supported the reactionary Kuomintang regime in China and came to grief. Even now they support the remnants of that regime in Formosa.

It is in this context of Middle Eastern policy that one can fit in the old British policy in India of encouraging separatism and ultimately building up of Pakistan. Pakistan was to become a part of this Middle Eastern Islamic bloc. It was not realized that while Islam is undoubtedly a great force, the new nationalisms of Asian countries were, on the political plane, a much greater force. India was and is considered very important, as it undoubtedly is. But there was some uncertainty about India's policy, as it followed an independent line of its own. Pakistan, for all its loud talk, was a much more pliable instrument and easy to control. Hence Pakistan was to be the centre of this Islamic bloc of nations in Western Asia and it was through Pakistan that this bloc could be most easily controlled. It became important therefore to build up Pakistan for this purpose, both internally and externally. The vast and well-established publicity machine of the U.K. worked to this end. Pakistan publicity had little to do because others did its work much more efficiently and thoroughly. All it had to do was to make clear that it would fit in with the general policies laid down for it. Inside Pakistan, there continued, both in the defence forces and the civil service, a considerable number of British officers, nearly all of them of the old colonial type. They influenced policies there and even day to day activities.

If Pakistan had to be built up, then it became necessary that Kashmir should go to Pakistan both to give it additional strength and so that the borderland touching the Soviet Union should be under control. Hence the basic policy of the U.K. in regard to Pakistan. This flows from the old policy and it is easy to justify it on the simple plea that Kashmir is predominantly Muslim and therefore it should go to Pakistan.

The U.S.A. did not have this background of Middle Eastern and Indian policies of the U.K. But, in such matters, they followed the U.K. advice and lead. This was all the more easy because they felt with the U.K., and perhaps even more so, that Pakistan was easy to keep within their sphere of influence in regard to wider policies, while India was an uncertain and possibly not reliable quantity in this regard. Because of this also, both the U.K. and the U.S.A. have been irritated with Afghanistan, which does not fit in with their ideas of how Pakistan should develop, and have continually brought pressure to bear upon it to fall in line with Pakistan. Afghanistan has refused to do so and continues to be hostile to Pakistan because of the Pakhtoonistan issue.

This whole policy which the U.K. and the U.S.A. have pursued in varying degrees in Asia may meet with some success in some places and on same occasions. But it is basically misconceived, because it fails to take into consideration the major factor, that is the new urges that move masses of men and women in the different countries of Asia. In the Far East this policy has led to an impasse; in Iran it has created great difficulties for the U.K. As I pointed out to you in my last letter, the oil dispute in Iran is but the outward manifestation of something much bigger.

I hope that the analysis I have made of the past and present policies will help you a little to understand the situation in relation to India, and especially Kashmir. We are often blamed for our propaganda and some of the criticism is no doubt justified. We are, of course, at the same time

told to economize and not to waste money in foreign countries. We cannot have it both ways. As a matter of fact, Pakistan throws money about in foreign countries on its propaganda and uses many methods which we do not consider desirable. But, in the main, they have the benefit of vast propaganda machines of other countries which we do not and cannot have, if we pursue our independent policy. This is, of course, a simplified way of describing a complicated situation. In the final analysis, however, it is thoroughly understood in the U.K. as well as in the U.S.A. that India counts far more than Pakistan.

*From a letter dated 16 June 1952*

The recent decisions of the Constituent Assembly in Kashmir have excited a great deal of interest all over India. During the last four and a half years and more, the war and other developments in Kashmir have made people all over India vividly conscious of that beautiful valley. We are not merely interested in it as a part of India but our emotions have been roused and anything that happens there therefore affects us much more in some ways than developments elsewhere might do. It is easy to understand, therefore, that recent happenings there have created a great deal of interest all over the country. There were some misunderstandings and once misunderstandings come in they are not easy to remove. Some people thought that the leaders of Kashmir were not playing quite fair with India and might even think of a breakaway from India. Naturally this thought was rather painful. As a matter of fact, if one thing is certain it is this that not only the leaders but the great mass of the people in Kashmir want to be associated with India and want the accession of Kashmir to India to continue. So far as we are concerned, whatever our feelings might be, we have made it repeatedly clear that it is for the people of Jammu and Kashmir state to decide about their future. We are

not there on sufferance or as an imposition on others. We are there because we were invited to go there to save Kashmir from a brutal invasion and rack and ruin. We have continued to be there because the people of Kashmir wanted us and because of the responsibility for defence that we undertook by virtue of the accession. I have no doubt in my mind that the leaders and the people of Kashmir are anxious to continue this accession to India and if there is a plebiscite on this point it will be in India's favour.

This important fact must therefore be kept in mind when we consider other problems. It should also be remembered that Kashmir's accession to India was, like that of all other states at the beginning, on three subjects only, namely, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. Much later the other states acceded in regard to many other subjects also. Kashmir remained where it was for a variety of reasons, among them being the fact that the United Nations were seized of this problem and we did not wish to appear to by-pass them in this matter. Indeed, in the Constitution of India, we made special provision for the Jammu and Kashmir state in the transitional provisions. Recently the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir has laid down a directive principle about the head of the state being elective. This, by itself, is not new to those who have been associated with the Kashmir problem. When the Constituent Assembly was inaugurated last year, Sheikh Abdullah, the Prime Minister, stated as much in his inaugural address. The question for us now to consider is how to deal with this matter, keeping in view always the close and firm association of Kashmir with India.

*From a letter dated 25 July 1952*

The accession of Jammu and Kashmir state was complete just as the accession of other Indian states was complete when it first took

place. But later the other states accepted a closer integration with the Union. Kashmir did not, and could not, in the circumstances. That does not lessen in any way its accession to India. This matter came up before us when the Constitution of India was being finalized about November 1949. Sardar Patel dealt with it then and he gave a special, though transitional, place to the Jammu and Kashmir state in our Constitution. This was embodied in Article 370 of the Constitution and the President's Order which was issued on January 26th, 1950. In accordance with this Article and this Order, only certain parts of our Constitution were applied to Kashmir state. That position continued and still continues. It might have continued like this for some more time if the Constituent Assembly of the Jammu and Kashmir state had not been meeting now to finalize their Constitution. . . .

This is the legal approach. But far more important than this is the psychological approach, and this has been recognized right from the beginning. We have stated all along that there is going to be no compulsion of any kind on the people of Kashmir. It is for them to decide. If they wish to leave India, they can do so, however much this may be painful to us. If we adopt any other policy, that will be against our basic principles, our pledges to the people of Kashmir and to the world, and would, in addition, be a justification of the charges that Pakistan has brought against us. Because of this, we have always laid stress on the right of the people of Kashmir to decide their future and the extent to which they will accept the various parts of our Constitution. In other words, while being a constituent unit of India like all others, the measure of state autonomy in their case is somewhat greater for the present than that in other States. It is open to them and to us to vary this in future.

In the nature of things, what holds us together is not law or Constitution, but the feelings of the people on both sides as well as their common ideals and objectives. That is the basic bond.

Everything that we do should be judged from that standpoint. The agitation in parts of Jammu Province against the present Kashmir Government is, from this point of view, basically misconceived, because it tends to loosen that bond and to make large numbers of people in Kashmir rather apprehensive about their future.

The talks we had with Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues were long and sometimes rather exhausting. But there was no real difficulty about them, as we approached these complicated questions in a friendly and comradely way. Unfortunately, largely because of press propaganda, a mist of doubt and suspicion had arisen in the minds of many people. I am glad that this has been removed and we can continue to work together with full faith in each other. Whatever the importance, political or other, there might be for us (and the importance is very great for both of us) in the Kashmir state being part of the Union of India, that partnership can only subsist in friendship and faith. Only then it has some value. It is on the basis of this that we have proceeded in the past and this has brought rich dividends. It is on this basis also that we propose to go ahead in the future.

*From a letter dated 2 August 1952*

One of the dominant features of the present day is of course the emergence of China as a great power. This has completely upset the old balance. The last war itself resulted in upsetting this old balance and only two really great powers emerged from it—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. All other countries were, from this point of view, secondary and, to some extent, dependent. The new China has further upset the old equilibrium, more especially in the Far East and in other parts of Asia. That is a major fact of the present age, and not to appreciate or recognize it means shutting our eyes to reality. Because of this refusal to recognize the emergence of this new great power, the

United Nations has got into ever-increasing difficulties. It is not a question of liking or disliking the new regime in China. Fortunately for us we took a more realistic view from the beginning and adapted ourselves to it. We did not wholly like some of the consequences of this new development. For us it became a vital matter to consider that we had this new great power as our neighbour with 2000 miles of frontier between us. There were inherent dangers in that and we had to protect ourselves against them. These dangers were not because China was Communist but rather that a great power had grown and spread out to our frontiers. Our policy had to be adjusted to this fact. We wanted to be friendly to our neighbour, but, at the same time, we wanted to be firm about our own vital interests. Where these interests were not vital or important or were such that we could not define them, such as in Tibet, we were prepared to adjust ourselves to changes. But in vital matters, there could be no compromise. It is for this reason that I declared in Parliament on several occasions that our frontier with Tibet, known as the McMahon line, was our fixed and definite border and we were not prepared to consider any change in it. I went a little further and declared that our frontier was, roughly speaking, the Himalayas, from our defence point of view. That is to say that we could not tolerate any incursion even into Nepal across the Himalayas.

I might add that at no time did I think that there was the slightest reason to expect any aggression on our North-eastern frontier. A little clear thinking will show that it is a frightfully difficult task for any army to cross Tibet and the Himalayas and invade India. Tibet is one of the most difficult and inhospitable of countries. An army may possibly cross it, but the problem of logistics and feeding it becomes increasingly difficult. The climate is itself an enemy of any large-scale movement. Apart from this, there was no particular reason why China should think in terms of aggression in this direction. If

world war unfortunately comes, the principal theatres of that war will be elsewhere—in Europe, in the Middle East and in the Far East. No country is going to be foolish enough to get caught in the icy wilderness of Tibet and thus waste its resources and energy. Nevertheless, we had to be on our guard, not so much for an invasion but for some kind of gradual spreading out or infiltration. We have taken steps accordingly.

Our basic policy, however, remains to maintain friendly relations with China, subject always to protecting our interests with firmness. I believe the Chinese Government recognize both aspects of this policy and appreciate it. I think also that there is a definite feeling of friendliness towards India in China. That is due partly to historical reasons, partly to an Asian outlook and partly no doubt to their appraisal of the world situation. We have recently had some talks with the Chinese Government regarding our position in Tibet. With the Chinese over-lordship of Tibet, certain consequences flow. We cannot for long maintain some garrisons in Tibetan towns, like Gyantse and Yatung. These garrisons were placed there to protect our trade routes, because Tibet was weak and could not give protection. Our representative in Lhasa will in course of time become a Consul-General, as Tibet is no longer an independent country. There will be no difficulty in fixing these and like matters up.

*From a letter dated 26 August 1952*

Few people realize fully how the old balance of power has been completely shattered. We either create a new balance or go to war. Mere piling up of armaments does not create a balance. It adds to the fear that leads to hatred and utter lack of understanding. It is not enough for us to talk vaguely of peace and put forward high ethical and moral principles. We have to understand the position objectively

and practically in all its implications and then come to decisions. None of us, however powerful we maybe, can mould the world after our pattern. There are inherent limitations in the power of the greatest country and it is dangerous to overestimate one's own power and to underestimate the power of the adversary. We have to keep this in view ourselves in regard to our limited commitments, whether they are military or financial. It is extraordinary how some people, who should be presumed to be responsible, talk irresponsibly of war, as if war was the solvent of all ills. One of our gravest problems is that of minorities in East Bengal. There is no doubt that the Pakistan Government has, in the past, followed a policy of squeezing out the middle classes especially. The April 1950 Agreement certainly brought about some improvement, but the process continues and there is a great deal of distress. We try to deal with this problem on the diplomatic plane. The only other plane is that of war which, I am convinced, will not solve that problem, whatever else it might do. Yet, leading personalities talk about our adopting methods which can only lead to war. I cannot imagine anything more irresponsible from every point of view and, more especially, that of the minorities concerned. We are accused sometimes of a policy of appeasement and are asked to get tough with Pakistan. The toughness that our accusers exhibit is the use of strong and offensive language. That is not how a civilized nation acts, nor is that the way of statesmanship. A nation conserves its strength and, because of that strength, can sometimes afford to take strong action. Even that action is inevitably limited by the strength and resources of that nation. It does not issue threats and use offensive language.

In the world today we live in some kind of a twilight between peace and war. The old balances having been completely upset, no new equilibrium has taken their place. For a long time Europe was the political centre of the world. Then America came into this

picture and Europe and North America became two main centres. Now Western Europe has receded into the background and the two principal centres of power are supposed to be Washington and Moscow. At the same time, great changes and revolutions in Asia have taken that vast continent, to a large extent, outside the purview of colonial politics. China has emerged as a great power and, because of its alliance with the Soviet, has added greatly to the weight of Moscow in the world affairs. It must be remembered, however, that China and Russia need not pull together in every matter, because there are bound to be occasional conflicts in their national interests.

As the atomic age advances, war ceases to be a means of furthering a foreign policy, because war becomes an instrument of universal destruction. If there can be any justification for war today, it can only be in pure self-defence or self-preservation against aggression. Where there is such an aggression and a challenge to the very existence of a nation, that challenge has to be met. Or else, the nation disintegrates.

In this dangerous and threatening state of the world, what are we to do? We cannot play a major part, but we can, perhaps, play some small part in either hastening or averting catastrophe. If we line up with either of the major contestants for world supremacy, we give up such little influence that we might possess in averting catastrophe and in that sense we hasten it. Keeping apart, we, and such other countries as function in the same way, at least keep an area free from the fever of war and can view events with some calmness and objectivity, and occasionally throw our weight on the side of peace. Thus, whether we look at this question from the point of view of narrow national interest or the larger one of world peace, the only policy we can pursue is one of non-alignment with the power blocs and trying to maintain friendly relations with all countries.

*From a letter dated 20 November 1952*

We have to be firm with Pakistan and not allow vital interests of self-respect to suffer. But, at the same time, we must remember always that we cannot live forever in terms of hostility with Pakistan. If we thought of doing so, then we have to give up all ideas of development and progress. Two countries like India and Pakistan are so intimately connected that continued hostility between them is likely to ruin both and invite foreign interference. We may do a great deal of injury to Pakistan and might defeat it in war. But both countries will in effect be ruined if that extreme-step had to be taken. We would not even be strong enough to stand up against any external interference. We must realize, therefore, that while we have to be firm, we have also always to remember that sometime or other we have to come much nearer to each other and become friends. Such a policy may not appear immediately to be very attractive. But I have no doubt that it is the right and the wise policy and a policy which will be beneficial to the minorities in Eastern Pakistan. It is most unfortunate that there are no effective leaders in Pakistan at present and it is always difficult to deal with a weak Government which cannot make up its mind or dare not take right action for fear of disapproval by some extreme group. The mere fact that political and economic conditions have deteriorated in Pakistan weakens that Government still further. We must always remember, however, that there is such a thing as the people of a country and ultimately they count. They might be excited or worked up to a pitch occasionally as the people of Pakistan have been from time to time. But I have little doubt that great numbers of people in Pakistan would like to have more friendly and co-operative relations with India. We should encourage this tendency and work to this end, always being prepared for any emergency that might arise. Thus, we shall not only do the right thing in terms of the present and the

future, but will also be adopting the most practical and worthwhile course. We cannot become cheap imitators of Pakistan's policy of tactics. We are, I hope, a mature nation with a mature leadership and we should function, therefore, with vision and not allow ourselves to be hustled into wrong action.

*From a letter dated 27 January 1953*

The Jammu agitation, about which I have written to you previously, is again a remarkable instance of folly or of mischief. A person of ordinary intelligence can see that this agitation must prove harmful to the interests of Jammu and India both and plays into the hands of Pakistan, And yet, outwardly it is carried on in the name of closer union with India. The whole question of Jammu and Kashmir state is, as you know, exceedingly intricate and is tied up today with international affairs. For any organization to start an agitation which must necessarily impinge on these international factors to our disadvantage is the height of unwisdom. And yet certain communal organizations in India, notably the Jan Sangh, the R.S.S., and the Akali Dal, have thrown their full weight in support of this agitation. It is clear that the objective of these organizations is not confined to Jammu and that they are aiming at bigger quarry. Their dislike of the Government of India and the secular policy that it pursues is so great that, in order to injure it, they are prepared presumably even to do harm to our relationship with the Jammu and Kashmir state. You will remember that some months ago, after prolonged talks, we arrived at an agreement with the Jammu and Kashmir Government and this was ratified by Parliament. The purpose of this agitation is to upset that agreement. That is bad from the national point of view as well as the international. To ask for Jammu province to have a closer union with India is to encourage the disruption of the

Jammu and Kashmir state with all the evil consequences that must flow from it. Indeed, Jammu province itself might disintegrate. Our position vis–à–vis Kashmir Valley inevitably weakens very greatly. Indeed, if that disruption takes place, we have hardly any position left in the valley. Even now, the Jammu agitation is having an adverse effect in the Valley.

But, even apart from the effect on Jammu or Kashmir, this agitation is so basically communal and opposed to our policy that to surrender to it in any way would mean a complete reversal of the all-India policy that we have pursued. So long as the present Government of India is functioning, this cannot happen. Unfortunately, many people do not realize all these consequences. It is true that in a number of matters the Jammu and Kashmir state has a somewhat larger autonomy, by agreement with us, than other states. That is the result of certain historical, political and international factors which cannot be ignored, however much we may wish to do so. The way to a closer union is not by compulsion or by this kind of agitation, which is an attempt at compulsion, but by developing closer association in many ways, other than legal and constitutional, and by a feeling of confidence in and reliance on each other. It is this very feeling that is likely to be shaken by this agitation.

The land reforms in the Jammu and Kashmir state have naturally hit the old landlord element hard both in the Valley of Kashmir and in Jammu. Some people in Jammu have perhaps suffered more because land in the Valley is richer and more fertile than some of the land in Jammu province. Hence a uniform ceiling is somewhat more to the disadvantage of some of these people in Jammu. Then there is the fact of demobilization of part of the Kashmir state forces, as was done in the other old princely states in India. Naturally, this has caused some distress, and, I am afraid we, in the Government of India, have been rather slow in dealing with the claims of this

demobilized personnel. That is the responsibility of our Defence Ministry and not of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. We are trying to expedite this matter.

The basic fact is that under the Maharaja's rule in the Jammu and Kashmir state the people of Jammu had a sensation of being the ruling class in the state. They belonged to the Maharaja's clan. They were taken in the army, when no Kashmiri proper, whether Hindu or Muslim, was admitted in the Kashmir state forces. Since the accession of the state to India, this position has changed completely. Jammu is no longer the dominant partner in the state. In theory it is an equal partner, but it may be true that somewhat more attention has been paid to the development of the Kashmir Valley than of Jammu province. That matter can and no doubt will be remedied. The difficulty of course is that of finance. All kinds of unfounded charges are made, such as that Jammu people are not taken into the services. Most people imagine that this means that Hindus are deliberately kept out of the services of the state. This is demonstrably untrue and the number of Hindus occupying responsible position in the state is very considerable. Indeed, apart from some changes, the old services continue. It is true that in Jammu some of the Hindu officials are from the Kashmir Valley. The reason for this previously, as now, was that the Kashmir Hindus were peculiarly adaptable to service and educationally much more advanced. They prospered in other parts of India too including the other princely states. The Jammu people were partly the Rajputs, who looked down on the services and were either the business elements and partly the landlords or in the state forces. Educationally they were generally backward. The changes that have taken place in the state have thus inevitably hit them. This is no fault of the state Government. I might mention that the state militia, which has been raised during the last five years, consists very largely of Jammu people, especially Rajputs. Kashmiris

do not take kindly to the profession of arms in any shape. Again, it is interesting to note that since the trouble with Pakistan all trade with Kashmir goes through Jammu. Previously most of this went through the Rawalpindi route. Thus, the Jammu merchants occupy a much more important position now than they did previously. And yet they are among those who shout most in the course of this agitation. Jammu city has grown largely during the last few years and there is a considerable proportion of displaced persons there. There is difficulty of accommodation and even more so of water supply. There is unemployment. All these are common difficulties in other cities of India and we try our best to deal with them.

It is probable that the Indian communal organizations will endeavour to create as much trouble as possible when Parliament reopens, and have demonstrations, etc. I am greatly distressed at this exhibition of utter irresponsibility. One can only understand it if one realizes that all this has the larger objective of weakening the Government of India at whatever national cost. We cannot give in to this and we must face these communal developments, wherever they occur, with all our strength.

*From a letter dated 22 August 1953*

The recent events in Kashmir are undoubtedly of primary importance not only in the Kashmir state itself but in the whole of India and, to some extent, in the world. Much of this importance is due to the fact that the events appeared to have come with the suddenness of a thunderbolt. In fact, few things happen with that suddenness and there are always long-standing and underlying causes behind events. Three months ago, in May last, I visited Kashmir for two days. This was before I went to England. I was surprised and dismayed to see the state of affairs there and the great deterioration that had taken

place in many ways. There was a process of disintegration and an acute internal conflict among those who had been our colleagues for so long. I was peculiarly unhappy to find how Sheikh Abdullah had changed. All I could do then was to beg of Sheikh Abdullah and others not to allow this process of disintegration to continue and not to take any step which might make the situation even more difficult. I asked them to stay their hands till I came back from Europe when we could discuss the various problems confronting us fully. When I was in England, I continued to have disturbing accounts of conditions in Kashmir. On my return, one of the earliest things I did was to invite Sheikh Abdullah to come to see me in Delhi. I had previously invited him to the A.I.C.C. meeting in Agra. He said he could not come to Agra but he would try to see me later in Delhi. However, he did not come to Delhi in spite of repeated invitations. He sent Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mirza Afzal Beg later, but that was hardly satisfactory.

Meanwhile, the situation went on relentlessly towards the final crisis. Government did not function there and Ministers spoke against each other. The National Party that had been built up after more than 20 years' labour started disintegrating. The people were confused and apprehensive. Visitors who had gone in large numbers this year to Kashmir, sensing this impending crisis, left the Valley and large numbers of petty shopkeepers who had invested their all in the handicrafts of Kashmir hoping to sell them to these visitors, were suddenly stranded.

We met people from Kashmir. Some of my colleagues went there at my request and otherwise and came back and reported. At every stage the report was worse than the previous one. It became clear that it was impossible to carry on in this way. Government could not function and everything was disintegrating. Sheikh Abdullah's attitude became more and more bitter and he seemed to be bent

on upsetting everything in Kashmir. Indeed, in the course of a conversation with a friend, he said that he would set fire to the state. I do not know what he meant by that. But it indicated the state of his mind which was almost functioning as if it was unbalanced. So we came to live under constant apprehension of an impending disaster. It was a very difficult and distressing situation. There was no easy way out. To allow things to continue as they were was to invite disaster and, in any event, that was a feeble way of meeting a situation. To take any steps to check it also meant inviting trouble. The choice, as often in our lives, was one of the lesser evil.

We were told repeatedly that something must be done. We were informed that the majority of the Cabinet held one view and the minority, including the Prime Minister, another; that majority commanded the considerable majority of the executive of the National Conference as also very probably of the Conference itself and the Constituent Assembly. Our advice first was that some way out should be found for co-operation, as any other course was likely to lead to unfortunate results. If this was impossible, then a Government should be formed which could function and which held one view and not several diverse views. The procedure must be fully constitutional. If the Cabinet split up, it should resign and go out of office and another Cabinet formed. We stressed that this should be done in the proper way in accordance with constitutional procedure. We realized, of course, that all manner of difficulties might arise. We could not deal with every possible consequence. We were anxious, however, that our Army should not be involved and we issued strict injunctions accordingly.

For some days, further disintegrating developments took place and then the final crisis came in the Cabinet resulting from the demand of Sheikh Abdullah for the resignation of a Member, who happened to represent the majority view of the Cabinet. Events followed in

quick succession resulting in the dismissal of the Abdullah Cabinet, the swearing in of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad as Prime Minister and later in the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah himself. We learnt of these events after they had taken place. It was difficult for us to say anything at that stage because the resulting situation had to be dealt with on the spot and anything that we could have said from here might only have resulted in adding to the confusion and making nobody responsible. We had, therefore, to watch events as they happened. It appeared that, after the dismissal of the Abdullah Cabinet, there was a danger of Sheikh Abdullah promoting an upheaval and civil strife on a considerable scale. This was to be avoided and so the next inevitable step was taken by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the new Prime Minister, to order his arrest.

It is easy to be wise after an event. But, when events follow each other in quick succession, each leading to the other, it is difficult to stop or divert their course much. How and when did this deterioration begin leading to the final crisis? It is difficult to draw the line, but there can be no doubt that one of the most powerful elements at the back was the Praja Parishad-Jan Sangh agitation which created a great effect not only in Sheikh Abdullah's mind but in the minds of the people in the Valley. This agitation embittered them and it appeared to them that the Jan Sangh and its supporters represented the prevailing sentiment in India and this frightened them. The people began looking in other directions. Sheikh Abdullah became peculiarly bitter and rather lost his moorings. We can criticize Sheikh Abdullah for going astray and forgetting the principles on which he had long stood, but that does not help much in understanding a situation which at first gradually and then rather suddenly confronted us. This situation was primarily the result of this communal agitation which went on in Delhi, in the Punjab and in some other parts of India for many months. Thousands of Kashmiri labourers, who came down

to India in the summer, went back with bitterness in their hearts. They spread to the villages. We see here the dangerous results of wrong action. It is true that some of us condemned this agitation repeatedly in Parliament and elsewhere, but it is also true that many vaguely sympathized with it, not realizing the dangers inherent in it. And so, we have to suffer those consequences and those dangers.

The situation developed as some inevitable tragedy which could not be stopped. It has left a bad taste in the mouth and I have felt unhappy, for much that has happened has not been good, and a long trail of consequences will flow from it. If we believe as we have done and must do, that the people of Kashmir must decide their own fate, then obviously things have happened which have weighted the scales against us. Some of our friends in the past have often demanded what they call 'strong action', not realizing that what is always necessary is wise action.

We see here in this matter the unfortunate triumph of communalism. We have battled against this, but, in the particular instance, we have failed and the consequences may well be serious for the whole of India. It would be some small gain if we realized even at this late hour, how perilous and harmful this communal mentality is and how it is impossible to build up a strong and progressive India if we permit these reactionary and disintegrating forces to have play in this country. It does little good to blame others. Others will go wrong. The question always is how far we are functioning rightly. If we act rightly, then it does not very much matter what others do.

*From a letter dated 15 November 1953*

I come now to another subject of extreme importance to us, that is, the impending military pact between Pakistan and the U.S.A. We cannot come in the way of such a pact between independent

countries. But we are affected by it very greatly and, therefore, we cannot ignore it. . . . American newspapers and journals have been full of it. They talk, with evident satisfaction, of building up a vast and well-equipped army in Pakistan. The *New York Times* suggested a figure of one million men. An important weekly journal, The *U.S. News and World Report* says that 'Pakistan looks like the answer to a prayer' because it will supply this vast army to fight communism in the Middle East. The Americans cannot think of anything else but of getting bases all over the world and using their money power to get manpower elsewhere to fight for them. As it is, it would be interesting to jot down on the map of the world all the places where there are American bases at present, in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia apart from the Americas. The military approach is dominant in U.S. politics and there is an almost total unawarness that human beings count and might even make a difference. The major problems of Europe and the Far East ultimately turn now on the rearmament of Germany and Japan, both supposed to provide manpower for this great fight against communism. Meanwhile, masses of people in various parts of the world, notably Asia and Africa, who are far more interested in their own freedom than in communism or anti-communism, resent these developments.

In any event, a military pact between Pakistan and the U.S. changes the whole balance in this part of the world and affects India more especially. The U.S. must realize that the reaction in India will be that this arming of Pakistan is largely against India or might be used against India, whether the U.S. wants that or not. Possibly they think, as indeed some of their newspapers say, that India might be frightened in this way and made to line up with them in her wider policies. In effect, they imagine that such an alliance between Pakistan and the U.S. would bring such overwhelming pressure upon India as to compel her to change her policy of non-alignment. That is rather a naive

view because the effect on India of this will be the opposite, that is one of greater resentment against the U.S. We are not accustomed to act under threats or compulsion or coercion.

Although this development is undoubtedly serious, there is no need for us to get excited about it and nothing is going to happen suddenly. All this takes time and much will no doubt happen before the full consummation of the U.S. pact with Pakistan. Even in Pakistan itself, there will be considerable resentment and opposition, although it may not be strong enough to bring enough pressure on the Pakistan Government. It is clear that if a number of bases are given by Pakistan to the U.S., Pakistan becomes in a sense an American colony and certainly a satellite country to the U.S. This may appear to be an addition to the military strength of the U.S.A., but it will also lead to their weakness in other respects. It is evident that the U.S., like the U.K. of old, prefer backward and reactionary regimes because they can deal with them more easily. I suppose they might well be rather pleased at the prospect of Pakistan becoming an 'Islamic Republic' and perhaps the leader of Western Asia. The viewpoint has been well publicized that Islam is against communism and that is enough for the U.S. The United Kingdom failed in its policy in the Middle East because it relied on these reactionary elements. The U.S. is hardly likely to succeed where the U.K. failed.

*From a letter dated 1 December 1953*

I have referred to American expansionism which has resulted today in American bases being spread out all over the world in every continent and in every sea. I believe that there are nearly forty such bases in various parts of the world. On the other hand, there is the expansionism of the Soviet Union and the newly integrated and powerful State of China. We have to guard ourselves against that also.

There is no present fear from either of them to India. But we have to prepare for the future. We cannot do so by starting an armament race with any countries of either bloc. We cannot afford that and it is the wrong way. We can only rely ultimately on various factors, the chief amongst which is internal cohesion and strength of will and mind. Another factor is the balance of forces in the world. As you know, we have a frontier with China now extending to 1900 miles. It is the most difficult frontier region of the world, with the Himalayan mountains, skirted from one side by vast forests and very difficult country and, on the other, by the inhospitable land of Tibet. It is not an easy frontier for anyone to cross. At the same time, frontiers do not count in the atomic age. Our best policy with every country is one of friendship and firmness in defence of our rights. We are soon going to have talks with the Chinese Government about certain problems in Tibet. Those problems relate chiefly to trade, pilgrimage and certain old-time privileges that we have there. None of these are of any great consequence once we recognize the sovereignty of China in Tibet. What is of essential consequence is our frontier and by that we will stand. Indeed, we do not propose to discuss this matter. In our talks with the Government of China, we hope to be friendly and at the same time firm.

*From a letter dated 1 July 1954*

The chief event of the past week, or rather the fortnight since I wrote to you last, has undoubtedly been the visit of the Chinese Premier Chou En-lai to Delhi. . . .

The visit of Mr. Chou En-lai, even apart from the surrounding circumstances, was an historic event of significance. The mere fact of the two major countries of Asia meeting in this way naturally drew the attention of the world. It was evident that the Indian public sensed

this significance. The welcome that Mr. Chou En-lai got in Delhi and during his brief visit to Agra was warm-hearted and affected him greatly. There was something in the air which not only the press and the politicians but even the public realized. The coming together of India and China, in spite of their differences, was a major event for Asia, and, perhaps, even for the world. Few people thought that this was an attempt of either India or China to subordinate itself or its policy to the other. The point was whether, with our different approaches, there was a possibility of co-operation in many aspects of international affairs. It was clear that the future course of events in Asia, not to mention the world, would be powerfully affected by the future relationship of India and China. Was this to be one of hostility, or of passive toleration in a spirit of isolation, or of some measure of co-operation for certain common ends? This was not merely a matter of today, although today's problems were important, but rather of the long stretch of years to come. There was the fact of our being neighbour countries with a vast stretch of common frontier. There was also the fact of both these countries having recently emerged into freedom, though their methods and their policies had been different. Each of them having rid itself of foreign domination was trying in its own way to find itself and to recover its own individuality. There was further the obvious fact of their largeness and the inevitability of their playing an important role in the future of Asia. Both in different ways, were trying to improve themselves, gain internal strength and to develop politically, socially, and economically. All these are common factors. The uncommon factor is, and it is a major one, that China had adopted very largely the Communist way and India the parliamentary democratic way. Even though there was this major difference, there was again a common factor of both thinking in terms of raising the under-privileged and removing the big inequalities that had existed in their social structures. Another

and major uncommonness in the two, which really flowed from the other uncommon factor, was India's stress on peaceful progress and China having followed a harsher and more violent course.

It became a major question, to which only the future could give an adequate reply, as to whether these two great and vital countries could adjust themselves to each other without coming into conflict, and could even co-operate in some measure, or was this not possible and we had to face active or passive hostility. The future of Asia was to depend on the answer to this question. Of course, there could be no unilateral answer. With all the goodwill in the world, and the desire for co-operation on the part of India, there could not be this co-operation unless China came at least half-way.

This realization came to me soon after the success of the Chinese revolution and the formation of the new Chinese Government on the 1st October 1949. . . .

We did not know then how the new Chinese Government would develop and whether it was possible to have friendly relations with it. In any event, it seemed to me desirable that we should, for our part, go half way to meet it, making it perfectly clear what our own position and policy were, internally and externally. That is, our approach to China was to be friendly as well as firm. We recognized the new Chinese Government on the last day, I think, of 1949 and the U.K. and some other countries followed soon after. The Chinese Government treated us much better than they did other countries, excepting the Communist countries. Our Ambassador got on well with them, but there was always some uncertainty in my mind as to what the Chinese Government might do. There was the Tibet question. It was clear that China would establish its sovereignty over Tibet. This had been China's policy for hundreds of years, and, now that a strong Chinese State had been formed, this policy would inevitably be given effect to. We could not stop it in any way, nor

indeed had we any legal justification for trying to do so. All we could hope for was that a measure of autonomy would be left to Tibet under Chinese sovereignty.

It must be remembered that we had succeeded in Tibet to certain special privileges which the British had acquired there. In effect, therefore, we were successors to certain expansionist policies of the old British Government. It was not possible for us to hold on to all these privileges because no independent country would accept that position. Thus we had a small number of troops in some towns of Tibet to guard our trade routes. We could not possibly keep these troops there. Our other privileges were in regard to trade matters and communications. The real influence of India, however, was something insubstantial but important. This was the reliance to some extent of the Tibetan Government on the advice of the Indian representative, whose position was also rather vague and not wholly justifiable by treaty. The Tibetan Government relied on our man partly because this tendency was a relic from the old days of British dominance and partly because they were afraid of China coming more firmly into the picture. In the new circumstances that had arisen, this influence could not possibly be exercised. All that we could do was to use our diplomatic influence in favour of Tibetan autonomy. We did that as tactfully as we could, knowing that we could not make very much difference. I think, however, that our efforts had some influence and somewhat delayed the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

It is patent that we could not help Tibet in any way to resist the growth of China's power in Tibet. This was wholly outside the range of practical politics and it would have been of very doubtful legality. We explained this position to the Tibetan Government and assured them of our friendliness and of our wish to help within the obvious limitations. Gradually, the Chinese established themselves at various strategic points in Tibet and were in a position to control

the Tibetan Government and its activities. They have taken care, however, not to interfere with the domestic set-up much and have not interfered at all with their social conditions, although these are very feudal. They have naturally built roads, etc., and established airfields because communications in Tibet were very bad. There has been much talk of Chinese troops' concentrations on our frontier with Tibet. There is not much truth in this except that some Chinese troops are present on the frontier and in various parts of Tibet. The total numbers are not great and are spread out. Indeed, the chief defence of Tibet is its very difficult terrain and the inhospitable nature of the climate. It is no easy matter for very large numbers of people from outside to live there. We get news often from Kalimpong about these Chinese military preparations in Tibet. It must be remembered that Kalimpong is a nest of all kinds of spies and the information these people gather is utterly unreliable. It usually comes from some émigrés who leave Tibet.

Being clear in our minds as to how far we could go into Tibet and how far we could not, we concentrated on one matter which was important to us. This was our frontier with Tibet. It took weeks and even months for our forces to reach that frontier. However, on this matter we were not prepared to parley with anyone, and I declared publicly in Parliament and elsewhere that this frontier, including the McMahon line was a firm one and was not open to discussion. Indeed, I went further and said that, from the defence point of view we considered the Nepal frontier with Tibet also our defence line. I said all this deliberately so that the Chinese Government might have no doubts about our attitude. I did not think it necessary to address the Chinese Government on this question because that itself would have shown some doubt on our part.

The behaviour of the Chinese Government towards us was, during the first two or three years, on the whole, good, though there were a

number of petty instances which we found rather irritating. To begin with also there was the usual Communist condemnation of some things in India. At the back of their minds they thought that we were tied up still with British policy. Gradually, however, the realization came that we were following an independent policy of our own and we took orders from nobody. This change may be dated from the date when we refused to sign the San Francisco Treaty. Since then, the behaviour of the Chinese Government was much better. So far as our Ambassadors in Peking were concerned, they were always treated with some consideration.

Then came the Korean war and later the armistice in Korea and the part we took in the post-armistice period. Much that was done by our representatives in Korea was not liked by the Chinese at all. But, on the whole, they did not challenge our bona fides. About this time, we started our talks about Tibet which ultimately led to the agreement. Most people have recognized this agreement as definitely a good thing. A few have criticized it on the basis that we have given up something which we should not have done. As a matter of fact, we have given up nothing which we held or could hold. Obviously, we cannot function within Tibet as if Tibet was under our influence. We have recognized certain obvious facts of the situation and come to understandings about trade, pilgrimage routes between India and Tibet, etc. There is no giving in at all. Two important aspects of this agreement are:

(1) that indirectly the question of our long frontier is settled; and
(2) the principles of non-aggression and non-interference, etc., are laid down.

I have given this rather long history of our relations with the new Chinese Government since its inception because I want you and others to bear this picture in mind. Those relations have not grown up accidentally but have resulted from a set policy pursued right from

the beginning. That policy, I repeat, was one of firm but friendly approach, of holding to our policy and preserving our interest, and at the same time, to co-operate where possible with China. This policy seemed to us not only the right one in the present but the proper one in the future. China and India were not only neighbours today but were going to continue to be so and we should lay, therefore, the foundations for that future also. From the point of view of Asia that seemed to be right and from the point of view of the world this appeared to be so also. Naturally, that policy could not be unilaterally pursued. It depended at every step on what China did. . . .

It was in this context of past and present events that Chou En-lai came to Delhi. We had long discussions daily. We talked through interpreters and everything had to be taken down so that it might be translated. This took time. Anyway, this had the advantage of our having a fairly full record of all that was said. Right from the beginning, there was a lack of rigidity about our talks and the atmosphere was friendly. He told me that he was not well-acquainted with most of the Asian countries—meaning thereby Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon, as well as the Western Asian countries—and would like me to tell him about them. He also said more than once that India was economically and industrially more advanced than China. I mention this to show that he took up no superior attitude at all in any matter. He was exceedingly receptive and wanted to know about India and these other countries. He was particularly anxious, of course, for the friendship and co-operation of India. He felt that India and China had an important role to play in Asia and that it was essential for them to co-operate for this purpose. He realized that in regard to some of the countries of Asia we were in a much better position to know about them and to have their confidence. I pointed out to him that many of these countries of Asia were a little afraid of these two giants, China and India. So far as we in India were concerned, we were anxious to remove all fears

and apprehensions, even from Pakistan. Our people and our interests were spread out in many parts of Africa also, and the policy we had laid down for our people was that they must in no way exploit the people of Africa, they must help them and if they were not wanted in Africa by the Africans, they would have no place there. Chou En-lai said that that was exactly the policy he wanted to pursue in regard to all his neighbouring countries. He wanted to convince them that China had no aggressive designs on them and the Chinese living abroad must behave properly. In regard to these Chinese overseas he said something which was new to me. Previously, all Governments of China had claimed the Chinese overseas as their nationals, whether they wanted to be so or not. Chou En-lai said that he was quite clear that the Chinese living abroad should either accept the nationality of that country and cut themselves away from China, politically speaking, or if they remained Chinese nationals, they should in no way interfere with the politics of the other country. All this indicated to me his extreme desire to develop friendly relations with these various countries and to remove all apprehensions from their minds. All this can, of course, be clever strategy looking to the distant future. No one can judge of inner motives. But it seemed to me that Chou En-lai was quite honest about what he said. His mind was concentrated on developing his own country industrially and otherwise and not getting entangled in any difficulties. In particular, he was always thinking of Asia and China's and India's responsibility to Asia. . . .

We are playing, almost against our will, an important part in international affairs and, to some extent, the maintenance of peace in future might well depend on us. Therefore, we should be perfectly clear of the policies we are pursuing. These policies have been repeatedly stated in broad outline in Parliament and elsewhere and there is no doubt that they are approved of by the majority of the people in India. But, sometimes, there is what appears to me to be

very unintelligent criticism. It is necessary, therefore, for us to be clear in our minds. Our policy externally is to prevent war because that is the primary consideration today. If war comes, then all other policies are swept away and we jump into a dark and unknown abyss. In furthering this policy, we seek to maintain friendly relations with all countries, but inevitably, support some action or oppose some other. What happens in Europe does not concern us so intimately, except that everything that may lead to war concerns us. What happens in Asia concerns us much more and we are part of it. Asia is in a state of turmoil and change, political, social, and economic. The only part of Asia which is at present rather dead from this point of view is Western Asia, and I would include Western Pakistan in this. Of course, the people are not dead and their minds too are agitated, but, for the moment, there is nothing important happening there. In Eastern Pakistan something did happen during the last elections, but it has been ruthlessly suppressed. Whether that suppression will succeed or not, the next few months or a year will show. It cannot, of course, ultimately succeed.

We may divide the world today, very roughly, in five parts:

(1) The United States and some countries fully echoing its policy, such as Turkey, Philippines, Thailand, etc.

(2) Some Western European countries like England and France, which are closely associated with American policy but disagree with it often and at present are unable to follow it fully.

(3) The Communist countries, and chiefly the Soviet Union and China.

(4) India and, to some extent, Burma and Indonesia, whose policy is basically neutral. Chou En-lai often referred to the South East Asia pattern of countries, meaning countries following a neutral policy. He said that Laos and Cambodia should accept this South East Asia pattern.

(5) Other countries, such as those in Western Asia or South America, which have no fixed policy of their own and are inclined to function under pressure.

The policy of the United States during the past few years has been a record of repeated failure. The reason for this is obvious, because the United States refuses to accept facts such as the new Government of China. It is because of this chiefly that the Korean war took place and the Indo-China war has been prolonged. There is little doubt that there would have been a settlement in Indo-China at least a year or two ago, and a settlement more favourable to France than is now likely, but for American opposition. Mr. Casey, the Australian Foreign Minister, asked me as to what American policy was. He said he did not know, neither did I, except for the negative fact of being opposed to communism. That negative policy had led to the strengthening of communism in many places in Asia especially, because it had made the United States line up with colonial and reactionary regimes. The staunchest supporters of American policy today are Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee and Bao Dai. In North Africa, in Morocco and Tunisia also, colonialism had been supported.

*From a letter dated 15 November 1954*

During my visit to China, I had a number of talks with the Chinese leaders. I had long talks with Premier Chou En-Lai separately. I also had joint talks with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and his principal colleagues . . .

Chairman Mao dealt at some length with the past two World Wars and their revolutionary consequences. He pointed out that China had no atom bombs or any equipment of the latest type. But the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had both. Ultimately it was the people who would count and who would be the deciding factors. He pointed out that the experience of both the World Wars was that the countries who

started the war were defeated and those who were on the defence won. Another consequence was revolutions in some countries and the freedom of some colonial countries. Thus, if unfortunately another World War took place, disastrous as it might be, it would lead to the defeat of the aggressors and possibly other revolutionary changes might take place. He was not afraid of a war if it came, but he did not want it because of its disastrous consequences to the world and because it would come in the way of developing their countries.

I was not fully in agreement with Chairman Mao's analysis, but I entirely agreed with him that war must be avoided and every step which might lead to war should also therefore be avoided. . . .

I referred to Chinese maps which still showed portions of Burma and even of India as if they were within Chinese territory. So far as India was concerned, I added, we were not much concerned about this matter because our boundaries were quite clear and were not a matter for argument. But many people took advantage of these old maps and argued that China had an aggressive intent or else why continue to use these maps. In Burma also this caused apprehension.

Premier Chou replied that these maps were old ones and China had not done any surveying to draw new maps. Their boundaries even with Mongolia and the Soviet Union were still not clearly demarcated and there were discrepancies. I pointed out that this might be so. So far as India was concerned, I repeated, there was no doubt about our boundaries and I was not worried about them. But I wondered how China would feel if a part of Tibet had been shown as part of India in our maps.

*From a letter dated 1 October 1959*

This tension that has arisen between India and China is, of course, of great concern to us. That does not mean that we should get alarmed

in the present or fear any serious consequences. I do not think any such development is likely in the foreseeable future. But the basic fact remains that India and China have fallen out and, even though relative peace may continue at the frontier, it is some kind of an armed peace, and the future appears to be one of continuing tension. It is this future that troubles me because it will involve both a mental and a physical strain on our country, and it will somewhat come in the way of our basic policies. Those policies, I believe, have been correct and I see no reason whatever why we should vary them. At any time, any change in policy would have been wrong; at the present time, when the world appears to be moving towards a new adjustment aiming at peaceful settlements and possibly far-reaching disarmament, such a change in policy would be even more unfortunate and uncalled for. Therefore, I am convinced that we should hold to that policy. To some people, this may appear rather odd and not in conformity with the realities of the situation. That argument would mean that the policies we have pursued were temporary and opportunist and liable to change with changing situations. Undoubtedly, no policy should be rigid and inflexible; it has to be varied from time to time to fit in with objective realities. But if these policies were based on some firm principle, as I believe they were, then there should be no question of our discarding that principle for what appears to be some momentary and opportunist gain.

We have thus to continue those basic policies and, at the same time, show firmness in our dealing with frontier developments. No principle and no policy can be pursued through weakness or fear. I have no fear of China, great and powerful as that country is. China will undoubtedly grow in physical might. Even so, there is no need for us to be afraid and, indeed, fear is never a good companion. But we shall have to be vigilant all the time and balance firmness with a continuation of our policy.

Behind all this frontier trouble, there appears to me to be a basic problem of a strong and united Chinese State, expansive and pushing out in various directions and full of pride in its growing strength. In Chinese history, this kind of thing has happened on several occasions. Communism as such is only an added element; the real reason should be found to lie deeper in history and in national characteristics. But it is true that never before have these two great countries, India and China, come face to face in some kind of a conflict. By virtue of their very size and their actual or potential strength, there is danger in this situation, not danger in the present, but rather in the future. That danger may be minimized by other developments and by the world moving gradually towards peace. But the danger will still remain, partly because of the tremendous rate of increase of the population of the Chinese State. Apart from population, there has been and is a certain homogeneity among the Chinese people which probably we lack. I have no doubt, however, that in the face of danger there will be much greater cohesion in India than we have at present. Perhaps, that may be one of the good effects of this new and unfortunate development.

In any event, we have to be firm and vigilant and, at the same time, calm and restrained, and we must realize that real strength does not come from strong language, or even by the addition to our armed forces, but from the general development of our country, from industrialization in a big way and from unity. We come back, therefore, to the basic problem of India's growth and development through our Five Year Plans and the like. We are forced by circumstances to think in a big way and not to waste our national energy in relatively superficial activities and petty conflicts. . . .

Minor controversies about the frontier might or might not be of importance. What we have to face, however, is something much deeper and more serious. This is a demand for considerable areas,

more especially in the N.E.F.A. All this means the Chinese want to come down on this side of the Himalayan barrier. This has two vitally important aspects: one that if a foreign power comes down on this side of the Himalayas, our basic security is greatly endangered; the other that a sentiment which has been the life-blood of India through past ages is shattered. That sentiment appertains to the Himalayas. As I said in Parliament, we are not going to make a gift of the Himalayas to anybody whatever the consequences. The Himalayas are perhaps a more vital part of India's thought and existence throughout the ages than almost anything else. They are vital for our security even in the present age of extra-modern weapons; they are vital for our cultural inheritance.

*From a letter dated 26 October 1959*

We have to face a fairly difficult situation in the present. But what is of far greater concern to me is the future that is gradually unrolling itself. I view this not with any fear but certainly with great concern. There is no reason why we should be frightened, and, in any event, the approach of fear is always a wrong one, I think we are strong enough to protect ourselves even though we might have a few knocks. But I do not like the idea of continuing tension and potential conflict between India and China. This is not because I am enamoured of China, but because I am enamoured of India and of peace. The burden of constant friction on a long border with a powerful country will be great and even worse than that burden will be the spirit of hostility that this arouses and which leads us to think in wrong directions.

I am asked both by some of our own countrymen and by people abroad: are you still going to adhere to your policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence? Some say that our policy has failed. I entirely disagree. Far from failing, this policy has had, in a sense,

marked success in the world as a whole and has contributed, I think, in some small measure, to the favourable developments that are taking place in the Western world as between the two mighty powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Of course, there are many other factors. But we have helped a little. That is of great consequence to the world's future, and indirectly it even affects the situation in Asia because a general improvement in the world situation must necessarily react on the situation in Asia. It is a fact, however, that our attempts at friendship with the Chinese Government have failed and there is unfortunately some actual and a great deal of potential conflict in the air. To say that this is due to our policy of non-alignment is to misunderstand the situation completely. Any other policy would not have prevented this happening but would have accelerated it and made it more difficult for us to play the part we did in the furtherance of world peace. Even today, and indeed at any time, I am convinced that that policy of non-alignment and an attempt at peaceful co-existence with all nations is the correct one. That does not mean our being complacent or our not taking all necessary and feasible steps to meet any dangers that might confront us.

The alternative to this is our plunging into the Cold War and thereby weakening ourselves in every way and, at the same time, vitiating the progress that has been made in the Western world towards understanding and the lessening of the Cold War. Only unthinking persons can suggest any change in our basic policy. For us, in a moment of excitement or weakness, to join the ranks of the Cold War protagonists and to seek military alliances would indeed be a tragic failure not only of our policy but of all that India has stood for. Even so, we would not gain that security which we desire. In fact, our security will be much more gravely imperiled, and no other country, however great it may be, can help us, in our hour of need. If unfortunately the situation between India and China worsened

and this led to a war, no one can help us directly in any measure. Probably what would happen is that that war would develop into a world war and the vast destruction and even annihilation which that entails. That is a poor kind of help that we would get.

*From a letter dated 22 December 1962*

In the two months or so since I wrote to you last, events have happened on our borders which have shaken up the whole country and left an unpleasant memory behind. Suddenly the entire country realized that the Chinese incursion was no mere frontier incident but a major invasion. Not only the integrity of India was threatened, but even our independence was menaced. . . .

A great deal has been said about the unpreparedness of our Army. This may be partly true but the general impression created on this subject is, I think, not true. Why then did our armed forces suffer serious reverses? People talk about lack of proper arms or even warm clothing, etc. It is true that our Army did not possess automatic weapons, in the sense of automatic rifles, though they had other automatic weapons like machine guns of various kinds. They had also the normal winter clothing. Unfortunately, some difficulty was experienced in sending them further winter outfits because everything we sent had to be dropped from the air and as the terrain was very mountainous with deep precipices, many of the air droppings were lost and could not be recovered. But, on the whole, it could not be said that lack of winter clothing or modern arms had any very great effect. . . .

It seems to me that the major reasons for our reverses were the choice of the terrain on which we had to fight the Chinese. This was all to the advantage of the enemy and very disadvantageous for us, the main disadvantage for us being that there was no easy access to

it by road or other means of communications. We had thus to send everything by dropping from the air. This included ammunition, other supplies, clothing, etc. Our Air Force did a very fine job of work, but this lack of proper communications was a great disadvantage. The Chinese, on the other hand, had easy communications behind them as the road system in Tibet came right up to our frontier. Looked at from a purely military point of view, we should have selected a much more effective line of defence which was connected by road at least to our main supply centres. This, however, would have entailed retiring to our own territory and allowing the Chinese to march along it without major fighting. Although this was the wiser thing to do, it was not a pleasant course to follow.

A second major disadvantage to our Army was the fact that our forces had been sent rather hurriedly from low altitudes near sea level to an altitude of about 14,000 feet. Anyone who has done any mountaineering knows the effect of this sudden change to high altitudes. It produces severe headaches and sleepless nights and generally devitalizes one. It is always desirable to acclimatize people at various stages before they reach the high altitude. We could not do so because the Chinese had already crossed our border and were massing their forces there. . . .

It is easy to be wise after the event. It is easier to criticize what has happened. But I do think that the two major causes for our reverses were those two that I have mentioned. Some of our Generals have been heavily criticized and have been retired from service. Many unkind things are said about them without much justification. It was right perhaps that they offered their resignation as honourable men. But the fault was hardly theirs. The faults, such as occurred, were of the local Commanders of Brigades and the like who had to decide on the spur of the moment what they should do when they were being overwhelmed by large numbers of the enemy. The Chief of

the Army Staff and the Army Commander who have resigned could hardly be said to be directly responsible. They were competent and brave men and it is very unfair to them to accuse them for something that was due to a large number of circumstances, many of them outside their control.

There was also the fact that the Chinese, after many long years of warfare, are experts at mountain fighting and have been trained specially for this purpose. Their methods of fighting are a mixture of regular orthodox warfare and guerilla war. In Korea, with much worse weapons, they showed what they could do against armies which had the latest modern weapons. Since then the Chinese had got much better weapons and had perfected their methods of mountain warfare. It is evident that they had been preparing for some such invasion for a long time past in Tibet. They had accumulated large supplies and their troops were living all the time at a high altitude. . . .

What were the motives that drove the Chinese to attack us in a big way? To say that this was just a desire to expand their territories or to take possession of the areas they claimed is not wholly an adequate answer, though there is something in it. Countries do not take such action involving dangerous consequences without a much deeper reason. The world today is in a state of Cold War between the two major blocs of nations led respectively by the Soviet Union and the United States of America, both of which are nuclear powers, with a tremendous capacity for destruction. A certain balance of terror has been struck up between them which exercises a restraining influence, but which also brings the ever-present danger of deliberate move or an accident which might bring nuclear war and the ultimate catastrophe. Between these two blocs, there is fear on both sides resulting in an attempt at continuous arming with the latest weapons of mass destruction. There are also attempts being made at some approach to a peaceful settlement of the problems that face them.

Recently, we came very near to a nuclear war over Cuba. It almost seemed for a few days that at any moment the atomic and hydrogen bombs might start bursting in various parts of the world bringing death and destruction to millions or even perhaps hundreds of millions. Fortunately, that crisis passed because both of the major parties concerned wanted to avoid such a war. Ever since then there has been a certain relaxation of tension, though that is not very great yet. Still it is noticeable, and for the first time in many years the hopes of people are reviving.

Besides these two major blocs of heavily armed powers there are a number, and a growing number of countries, weak in armed power but still exercising some influence in favour of peace. Perhaps they cannot by themselves make the ultimate decision in favour of peace. But they can and they have in the past made just that little difference which prevents a war from breaking out. They have become symbols, to some extent, of peaceful co-existence and their policy of non-alignment to military blocs has gradually been appreciated more and more even by the big blocs. Both the United States of America and the Soviet Union have appreciated this policy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence, even though they cannot adopt it for themselves because of their fear of each other. And yet, inevitably almost the world moves towards peaceful co-existence and should ultimately realize that objective unless war overwhelms it before that realization comes.

While some individuals in either group of countries may think and behave like war-mongers, the fact is that most countries or nearly all, including the leaders of the two blocs, do not want a war and would welcome some peaceful arrangement. The hunger for disarmament is itself witness of this urge.

But to this desire for peace and co-existence there is one major exception, and that is China. China has repudiated the doctrine of peaceful co-existence, even though sometimes it repeats it. It believes

in the inevitability of war and, therefore, does not want the tensions in the world to lessen. It dislikes non-alignment and it would much rather have a clear polarization of the different countries in the world. It is not afraid even of a nuclear war because as it is often said, they can afford to lose a few hundred million people and yet have enough numbers left.

Because of this difference of opinion, there is a wide and growing rift between the Soviet Union and China, even though they are military allies. They condemn bitterly each other's policies. It is obviously of high importance to the world as to how far this rift has gone and whether ultimately it will result in a complete break. Every chancellery in the world is deeply interested in this and tries to find out what the exact relationship of the two great countries is. Latterly, this inner conflict has come out into the open, and there has been much public cursing of each other.

China, for all its belligerency and the progress it has made in the past dozen years, is still by and large an undeveloped country and, during the last three years or so, has had bad harvests. This has weakened it greatly although its war apparatus may for the present be fairly strong. It realizes, however, that strength comes from industrial development and this is a difficult and slow process. However hard it may work, it requires a great deal of aid from outside. The only country from which it can get substantial aid is the Soviet Union; to some extent also from the East European Communist countries. Russia's softening down, in its opinion, in revolutionary ardour and its thinking of peace and peaceful co-existence, more and more annoys China greatly. This is partly because of their ideological differences, partly also because this leads Russia to help India and like countries in their industrial development. To that extent Russia cannot help China, and indeed because of ideological differences, it has stopped helping it at all and has withdrawn all its technicians and experts

from China. Many of the factories built with Russian help now lie deserted in China.

It was possible for China to fall into line with Russian thinking and present policy, and thus perhaps get more aid. But they are too proud to do this and trained too much in the old revolutionary tradition to accept defeat in this matter. What else then could they do? The other course was to heighten tensions in the world and to make non-alignment and peaceful co-existence more and more difficult to maintain. This was a direct assault on Russian policy. It can only be indulged in if they demonstrate that there was no such thing as real non-alignment by breaking those countries which practise it, and thus by increasing the polarization of the world. India was said to be the chief non-aligned country in the world, and a country which constantly preached the virtues of peaceful co-existence. If India could be humiliated and defeated and perhaps even driven into the other camp of the Western Powers, that would be the end of non-alignment for other countries also, and Russia's policy would have been broken down. The Cold War would be at its fiercest and Russia would be compelled then to help China to a much greater degree and to withdraw help from the nations that did not side with it completely in the Cold War.

This had also the advantage of frightening many of the smaller non-aligned countries which would have to choose between one bloc and the other. China's position would then become much stronger in Asia and her policy would have triumphed in the Communist world. Therefore, India had to be dealt with in furtherance of this wider policy and humiliated and forced either into joining the Western Bloc or into submitting to China. This submission does not mean physical domination but more of a mental surrender.

If this reasoning is correct, then India became the stumbling block to China in the furtherance of its wider policy. The removal of India as

a power which has become an obstacle in the way of China becoming a great power, became the primary objective of Chinese policy, and the elimination of non-alignment became particularly important from China's viewpoint. China wanted to show that Soviet policy was wrong. If this could be demonstrated then the Communist countries and those that followed them would veer round to the Chinese point of view and a hegemony of that bloc would be created. At the same time, the Asian and African countries would have to choose one way or the other. Many of them would be frightened of China. In this state of affairs, China would get much more help from the Soviet and allied countries and her industrialization would proceed more rapidly. If war comes, well and good. If it does not come, the strength of the Communist and allied bloc would grow and there would be interdependence of Soviet Union and China.

This analysis of course is a limited one. There are other factors which work too. The internal difficulties in China have made it more rash and adventurist and extreme elements in the Government there have taken control. They see that unless some such action is taken and China's industrial progress speeded up very greatly, it will weaken and the pace of progress will slow down. The only way, therefore, to prevent this is to create a situation in which the Soviet Union would be forced to come to China's help. In order to do this, India appeared to be the safest target for the present.

*From a letter dated 2 February 1963*

It is a little naive to think that all this trouble with China is essentially due to a struggle over some territory. It has deeper reasons. Two of the largest countries in Asia confront each other over a vast border. They differ in many ways. And the test is as to whether anyone of them will have a more dominating position than the other in this

border and in Asia itself. We do not desire to dominate any country, and we are content to live peacefully with other countries, provided they do not interfere with us or commit aggression. China, on the other hand, clearly does not like the idea of such peaceful existence and wants to have a dominating position in Asia. We do not want communism to come here and yet the essential conflict is more political and geographical than that of communism, although communism is an important factor in the background. Communism too is gradually developing two facets, one represented by the Soviet Union and the other by China. It is possible to live peacefully with the Soviet Union. But it does not appear to be possible to do that with China. Hence the essential conflict.

Meanwhile, as is well known, Russia and China are on bad terms, which are growing worse from day to day. They differ ideologically and in various other ways. But, again, the basic difference between Russia and China is that of two huge land masses confronting each other and gradually coming into conflict over national interests and for political reasons. If communism had not been there, this would have still happened. Communism, to some extent, apparently lessens the conflict between them. But national interests are more important than any ideological affinity.

We are thus seeing an inherent conflict between Russia and China developing fairly rapidly for reasons which are not connected with communism as such, although communism affects that conflict to some extent. It would appear that this conflict between these two vast countries will grow, and their relations will have a great effect on the world situation.

This is perhaps too simple an analysis and there may certainly be other factors to be considered. But essentially I think this is the basic cause.

# V

# INDIA AND THE WORLD

'India has, within the inevitable limitations imposed by events, tried to follow her own independent policy in foreign, as in other, affairs. No country can be hundred per cent independent in such matters because every act or policy flows from other acts done before and other things happening in the world. But within those limitations, one can be more or less independent. We have preferred to be more independent. That was not only an idealistic approach but, I think, an eminently practical way of dealing with current problems.'

Throughout his life, Nehru's writings exhibited a deep interest in global affairs and India's place in the world. In the following excerpts, we see the salience of these themes in his correspondence with the chief ministers. Nehru wrote with great enthusiasm about the decolonization process in Asia and Africa, of new nations taking their place within world history, and of possible ways to enable cooperation and resist the established power structures of international politics. In covering the rise and character of new powers such as China, the causes and consequences of the Cold War, international crises like the Korean conflict or Chinese military action against Tibet, Nehru provided the chief ministers with a detailed and fascinating account of global history. He also wrote, with humility, of lessons India could learn from other nations, including the United States which otherwise did not impress him. Most importantly, he explained his core foreign policy of non-alignment. Evaluating and defending its application in different contexts, Nehru repeatedly observed that the decision to be independent was a self-interested one. Refusing to align with power groups was the most effective strategy in international relations.

*From a letter dated 17 January 1949*

In China, the collapse of the Nationalist forces has been rapid and it is quite possible that the Nationalist Government might have to withdraw to South China. This means the establishment of a communist or a communist-dominated regime over a great part of North China. . . .

The victory of the Communists in China has far-reaching consequences not only to that great country but also to Asia as a whole and to the world. It is a little difficult to assess these consequences. Opinions vary. Some people think that this regime will be hundred per cent communist, others think that it will be a balance between communism and the Chinese temperament and genius. The Chinese never lose their essential characteristics and patterns of living and thought. Probably in the long perspective this Chinese pattern may maintain itself and it may be that a special Chinese type of communism might be evolved.

As China is in a state of acute disintegration, there is no danger of any aggression on the pan of Communist China on any adjoining country for a considerable time to come. What is likely to happen is that Communist parties in other countries will be greatly encouraged by the success of the Chinese Communists. It is likely that a Communist Government in China, to begin with, will be some kind of a coalition government which will function rather moderately and avoid any act which will bring it into trouble with other powers. Their general foreign policy, however, is likely to be in line with Soviet policy. . . .

The developments in China are having and will continue to have powerful reactions on the world situation though nothing obvious may happen for some time. In a sense, the precarious balance of power is affected and the U.K., U.S.A., and other like countries have

to face new problems in a new context. India, rather suddenly and inevitably, becomes the most important country of Asia, apart from the Soviet North. Relatively, therefore, the importance of India in world affairs has increased and all eyes are turned upon her.

The part that India has taken in regard to Indonesia and the summoning of the Asian Conference in New Delhi have further drawn world attention to India's role in international affairs and more especially in Asia. It is being increasingly realised that Asia has been ignored by the world powers in the past and now they are suffering for this neglect. In thinking of Asia they now think of India and of the line India may or may not take. Thus a great burden and responsibility is cast upon India. We have proclaimed, repeatedly and deliberately, that India does not seek any leadership of Asia or of any other group, but facts and circumstances are compelling India to play an important role in these developing world events. This requires careful thought and a balanced judgment.

Sometimes, individuals and newspapers talk rather wildly of India standing forth bravely as a crusader to protect Asia. A great country has to act quietly and with strength, and not in an agitational manner and with threats to other countries. Apart from the impropriety of such behaviour, it would not be in accordance with facts and with the capacity of India today to take effective action. We have, therefore, to proceed with a certain caution and deliberation and at the same time to adhere to the principles we stand for.

The action we have taken on Indonesia has made it perfectly clear that our foreign policy is independent of every other country. That, of course, does not mean that we function in isolation and in opposition to others. It does mean that even though we are still members of the Commonwealth of Nations, we can and do function as we want to. People who have criticised the possibility of our having some future relationship with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth must

realise now that even if there is such a relationship, it cannot affect our foreign policy. That would not mean our lining up with any particular group of nations.

The line that India has taken in regard to Indonesia and the summoning of the Asian Conference have compelled other countries to wake up to the dangers flowing from Dutch aggression. They have realised that if this type of aggression is allowed to go unchallenged, there will be catastrophe on a vast scale. I am writing to you on the eve of the Asian Conference, and delegates, from the countries invited, are already arriving. Every country that was invited has accepted our invitation and is sending over a delegate or an observer. . . .

Apart from the immediate objective in view, the Asian Conference is a historic and unique occasion bringing a large number of Asian Governments together. No doubt this will lead to a closer understanding of each other and to future possibilities of cooperation in many fields. We have made it clear that neither this conference nor any other kind of cooperation is conceived in any spirit of hostility to other countries or groups. This is not a diplomatic statement to get over possible difficulties, but represents what we honestly think is good for India, for Asia, and the world.

*From a letter dated 1 April 1949*

The Western powers are gradually coming to realise that their policy in regard to Asian countries has not been a happy one. Their support of reactionary regimes has not helped those regimes to continue and has merely made those powers more unpopular in Asia. They are now thinking hard as to what they should do to change this policy. Probably it is too late for them to do anything very effective in this matter before the changes they fear come about.

In Indonesia, the conflict of two policies is very evident. On the one hand, the Western powers are anxious to win the goodwill of nationalism in Indonesia, and that means the Indonesian Republic, for the alternative means their losing such little influence as they possess in Asia. On the other hand, their European commitments induce them to build up a West European front, Atlantic Pact, etc., which include the Netherlands Government. It includes, in other words, certain colonial powers like the Netherlands and France, and it becomes the interest of the Western group to build up the strength of these colonial powers. To some extent this can be done by the exploitation of colonial territories by those colonial powers. Congo, for instance, is a preserve of Belgium, and is a very rich preserve, containing probably the largest deposits of uranium minerals which are so necessary for atomic energy. Thus, from the point of view of consolidating their position in Western Europe, some powers have to go slowly in regard to the Netherlands and do not wish to weaken the Netherlands. From the point of view of their position in Asia, they wish to support the Indonesian Republic. There is this inherent conflict and hence their vacillating policy.

The fact is that in the larger world context, it is far more important, even from their point of view, to support nationalist and progressive elements in Asia, and more particularly not to encourage any colonial exploitation in Asia. This will count for far more in the end than in smaller gains in Western Europe.

For India, all these developments and possibilities pose new questions or old questions in a new garb. We cannot associate ourselves in any way with a policy in favour of colonial exploitation. This, not only because it would be opposed to all that we have stood for, but also because, in the present context, it would be a most unwise and harmful policy, and is destined to fail. Hence our very special interest in Indonesia. Also we have to realise that economic

reform is essential in order to meet the new situation. We in India, or some of us, are apt to think in rather static terms, not realising that big changes are afoot and that we shall be affected by them. Most of our people are mostly concerned with the next elections which may take place about the end of 1950 or perhaps early in 1951. No doubt these elections may well take place, but much will happen before they take place. It is better for us to think of all this that is happening now and will happen in the course of the next year or two, than to lose ourselves in thoughts of the election. Ultimately, India's strength and stability will depend upon her economic position, and to the extent that we improve the standard of the masses. That is the vital issue before us.

*From a letter dated 16 April 1949*

The decision to make India a sovereign republic affects the whole structure of the Commonwealth and raises important questions. If India is to go out of the Commonwealth, then of course no particular difficulty arises in maintaining the present Commonwealth structure for the countries continuing to remain in it. But the Commonwealth minus India will naturally be a very different thing from what it has been. If, on the other hand, India, as a Republic, continues in the Commonwealth, then a new element is introduced into it which has thus far been absent. This is the important question to be decided in London and it has a certain historic significance, apart from its practical consequences.

Generally speaking, it may be said that most Commonwealth countries, including the United Kingdom, are eager to have India continue in the Commonwealth. But they have been rather troubled by the consequences which might flow from a Republic's inclusion in it. Thus far a common allegiance to the King has been supposed

to be a binding factor. A Republican India cannot owe allegiance to the King. . . .

Our own position in India has been clearly stated on many occasions. Minor details might not have been worked out, but the basic approach has been the same for a long period. This approach is that India must be a sovereign Republic with full control of her internal and external policy, that the Indian citizen will owe allegiance to India and to no external authority, that, subject to the above, we would like to be associated with the Commonwealth of Nations (which, incidentally, can no longer be called the British Commonwealth). . . .

We have expressed our willingness to be associated in this way with the Commonwealth because we feel there are solid advantages to India and to the cause of world peace. But in being so associated, we cannot give up any vital thing that we stand for or accept the slightest limitations to our freedom in internal or external affairs. Also, I should like to make it perfectly clear again, that we propose to adhere to our policy of not lining up with any power bloc. Some people think that Commonwealth association necessarily means lining up. That, of course, is completely wrong. We have been uptil now in the Commonwealth, in fact, we have been a Dominion. Yet we have maintained the freedom of our foreign policy. In the future, we shall be in an even stronger position to do so. It is completely wrong for any person to think that we are indirectly associated with the Western Union or the Atlantic Pact or with any proposals for a Pacific Pact. We are going out of all such entanglements.

*From a letter dated 15 August 1949*

In the domain of foreign affairs, the policy we have pursued, not without success, has been to try to play a distinctive role without

lining up with power groups. That policy has been criticised and called ineffective. Others have said that, in spite of our declarations, circumstances are compelling us to line up with this group or that. I think both these criticisms are unjustified, and we have succeeded, in a large measure, in keeping ourselves free from entanglements, and in pursuing the path of our choice. The Commonwealth association has certainly not come in the way of our freedom of action in any way. I think that it has been good for India and for world peace. If any people imagine that that was a cloak for some kind of entanglement, they are mistaken. Inevitably our economic and other contacts are greater with some countries than with others. But that is not allowed to influence our major policy.

Because of this major policy, we have not aligned ourselves with any development like the Atlantic Pact or the Western Union. Because of this also, we have not encouraged the idea of a Pacific Pact. As a matter of fact, any talk of a Pacific Pact, while the Indonesian question as well as the problem of Indo-China remain unsolved, is completely premature. Who are we to have a pact with the Dutch Government in the East Indies or the Indonesian Republic? But apart from this, it is our belief that such a pact would, far from ensuring peace, be a direct incentive to conflict.

We believe that each country should be left to choose its own political or economic structure and to live its own life within the larger framework of international cooperation. Any attempt to interfere is not only unjustified but is bound to lead to trouble. Therefore, we do not seek to interfere in any way, by pact or otherwise, in the revolutionary developments that have taken place in China. It is for the Chinese people to decide what their form of government or economic structure should be and we must accept their decision, whether we like it or not. If we do not seek to interfere with any other country, we are also not prepared to tolerate interference of any

other country in our affairs. We shall cooperate with all countries who are prepared to cooperate with us. We shall seek to learn from them what they have to teach, but we shall go our own way in conformity with the high principles which we have so often proclaimed and the special needs of India and the genius of the Indian people. We can only pursue that way in foreign affairs, if in our own domestic policy and in our internal affairs, we are broadminded and tolerant and devoted to peaceful cooperation.

*From a letter dated 1 December 1949*

[During a recent visit to the United States,] I approached the American people in all friendliness. I was not prepared to be swept away by any passing wind. But I was receptive in mind and frank in approach. As always happens in such cases, the reaction was friendly and frank, even where there was a difference of opinion. That again led me to think how wrong it is for us, as individuals or as nations, always to criticise the other and to point out defects in others. It is far better to think of the good points of other people and other nations, for we can learn from them, and indeed by pointing them out, we encourage them. If this psychological approach was adopted by us in our lives and in our policies, most of our problems would be easy of solution. That, I take it, was the basic approach of Gandhiji, and that was why he drew out the best in us, weak as we were. Even his opponents bowed down before that greatness of spirit and deep understanding of human nature. . . .

The United States is a great country, not only in power and wealth but in other ways also. In some respects, an outsider like me felt out of place there, and rather critical. But I felt how foolish it was for us here in India or elsewhere to sit down in our little corner and criticise others for their failings, calling them materialistic and

worshippers of the almighty dollar and no more. That was true enough to some extent. But it was a very partial truth and it was a cheap way of describing a country. In the same way, some people criticise or hurl abuse at Soviet Russia. That criticism is often largely justified. But it is only partial truth. By judging a whole country in this slapdash way, we do not do justice to it or to ourselves. We merely confuse our minds and close them to many aspects of the truth. The fact is that the United States and Soviet Russia, vastly different as they are, have much in common also and have both very great achievements to their credit. Let us look at their achievements and learn from them instead of criticising their failings or what we consider to be their failings.

This general approach might be said to govern our foreign policy and, I hope, our general view of life. We hold to our anchor and refuse to be swept away by outside currents. We do not look at the world with eyes full of fear even though there is much that is bad and fearful in the world. We try to draw attention to the good in other countries and to profit by it ourselves. We try to understand the great forces that are moving in the world and reshaping it.

*From a letter dated 2 July 1950*

I have much to tell you about my travels in Indonesia, Malaya and Burma, but I must begin with the grave international crisis that has arisen in Korea [involving the clash between North and South Korea along the 38th parallel].

You know that we have decided to accept the resolution of the U.N. Security Council calling upon its members to help South Korea.* This

* The resolution called for, inter alia, the immediate withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th parallel and for member states to assist South Korea in repelling the attack.

decision was by no means a simple one and we had to give a great deal of thought to it. Our natural inclination, because of our foreign policy which we have reiterated so often, was to keep out of these troubles and certainly not to undertake any kind of responsibility. This general inclination was supported by some other facts. While North Korea has been a full-fledged Communist State, South Korea has been far from a modern or democratic State. We had recognized neither of these two Governments, although indirectly we were connected much more with South Korea. For some time past an Indian representative has been on the U.N. Korea Commission, which functioned entirely in South Korea, because the North would have nothing to do with it. Indeed, the first Korea Commission had an Indian for its Chairman. Nevertheless, it has been our desire to keep out of the Korean conflict and we did not approve of much that was done in both North and South Korea.

Another complication and difficulty that arose was the mixing up by President Truman of Formosa, Indo-China and the Philippines with the Korean issue. We have nothing to do with the Philippines, but our policy in regard to China and Indo-China has been a clear and definite one and it has not been in line with the U.S.A. policy. Hence the mixing up of these issues with that of Korea was embarrassing in the extreme. We have no desire whatever to side with either group in Indo-China. With the People's Government in China, we are beginning to develop some kind of friendly relations and we want this process to continue. We do not want to behave as if we were the enemies of this new China.

All these were reasons for us to keep aloof from the Korean struggle. On the other hand, as members of the Security Council, we could not remain silent and we had to come to some decision and declare it. It seemed to us that there could be no doubt that the North Korean Government had committed aggression on a large scale on

South Korea. We do not know what had happened previous to this. There had been many border clashes and it is quite possible that South Korea's record was not too good. But there can be little comparison between those border affrays and this major, well-planned invasion of South Korea. Thus aggression had taken place and to surrender to it was wrong and would have meant the collapse of the United Nations structure as well as led to other dangerous consequences. The first resolution of the Security Council declared that there had been this aggression. Our representative voted for it. To some extent it followed logically that something in the nature of the second resolution should be passed later. Normally, therefore, there would have been no particular difficulty, in theory at least, in our giving immediate support to the second resolution. But, in practice, there were obvious dangers and difficulties and there were certain complications also to which I have referred above. The matter was too serious to be decided on the spot at Lake Success by our representative and we instructed him, therefore, not to take any further step without special reference to us. This was before the second resolution had been proposed. This second resolution was brought forward in a hurry and little time was given for consultation with Governments. So when it came up before the Security Council, our representative could only say that he was waiting for instructions from his Government and could not participate in the voting till such instructions came. An attempt was made to telephone me, but it failed. Even if it had succeeded, the only answer I could have given was that we would consider the matter carefully. In spite of the urgency of the matter, it was essential that we should give it the most careful consideration and we could not allow ourselves to be hustled into a decision.

Our Cabinet gave it careful consideration and, as you know, came to the decision to accept the second resolution. I think that logically or practically, there was no other course open to us. In our resolution of

acceptance, however, we tried to make it perfectly clear that this did not involve any departure from our foreign policy of keeping aloof from rival and hostile groups of nations. It is true that it is not an easy matter to follow that policy when, to some extent, we do line up with a certain group. Nevertheless, there is a difference and we have tried to emphasize that. We have accepted a certain position which the U.N. took up, because we thought that there had been aggression and this aggression should be met. More than that, we were not prepared to do. We intend to maintain this distinction throughout. We do not wish to get entangled in the Formosa affair or in Indo-China.

As a consequence of our decision, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has asked us, as well as other countries, what active help we can give. In our reply, we have pointed out that we are not in a position to give any active military, naval or air help. Our defence apparatus is meant for home defence only and is not built up for activities in distant theatres of war. We do not keep expeditionary forces, nor do we have aircraft or naval vessels to spare for this purpose. Financially we are in a hard position and cannot afford distant adventures.

There is another reason which I should like to mention to you. If we supplied any active help of the kind demanded, in existing circumstances, it might have got us involved in the other activities which the U.S.A. have undertaken on themselves, that is, Formosa, etc. We were not prepared for this. Thus we have pointed out to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that we cannot supply this type of help: What we might have given at the most would have been some token help of little real and practical consequences, but, nevertheless, meaning a heavy burden on us and involving us in many complications. . . .

The situation is a difficult and dangerous one and is changing from day to day. Some people think that this is the beginning of the much

dreaded World War III. Others hope that war-like operations may be limited to the Korean region. I do not know what is going to happen. But there is undoubtedly a danger of the gravest kind. The least we can do is to try to avoid the type of hysteria which often prevails in countries when war comes or is threatened. We must keep cool and judge each issue as it arises, as dispassionately as possible, keeping in view our basic policy and our ideals. This is going to be a testing time for all nations and peoples, and it is likely to affect, directly or indirectly, most of our other activities. It may be that we are on the verge of a crisis that may change the future of the world, and such a crisis tests the inner strength of the people. Our normal politics and conflicts become unimportant when these great issues come up before us. We must, therefore, develop the right perspective, clarity of mind and the equilibrium of the spirit, in order to deal adequately with the problems that will encompass us in the days to come.

*From a letter dated 15 July 1950*

There have been many critics of the particular line we have taken up in regard to the Korean situation. But I think it is true to say that there has been, by the large, general approval of that line in the country. In moments of crisis, when passions are roused, it is no easy matter to make decisions from day to day. It is not difficult to line up with one particular group or way of thinking and thus to leave major decisions to them. But if we have to make our own decisions, we have to rely on our own judgement and analysis of the situation, and to keep in view our basic objectives and the foreign policy we have been pursuing thus far.

Some words are used loosely, and among these is 'neutrality'. Neutrality in peace-time has no particular meaning. It is only in war that a country can be neutral. But even in so-called peace-time, ever

since the last World War ended, we have lived in an atmosphere of war and expectation of war, and hence people talk of this or that country being neutral in the Cold War. In reality, all that this means is that we have not given up the right to decide for ourselves as to what we should do and what we should not do in any particular set of circumstances. To give up that right to decide means to give up both our independence of judgement and independence of action. In others words, it means to give up our basic independence and become a satellite of some other country tied down to a policy which we may or may not like.

India has, within the inevitable limitations imposed by events, tried to follow her own independent policy in foreign, as in other, affairs. No country can be hundred per cent independent in such matters because every act or policy flows from other acts done before and other things happening in the world. But within those limitations, one can be more or less independent. We have preferred to be more independent. That was not only an idealistic approach but, I think, an eminently practical way of dealing with current problems. Also it flowed naturally from our past. Any other policy would have come in the way of our natural development and stunted us, apart from creating a great deal of internal friction.

Foreign policy may and should depend upon certain ideals and objectives of a country. Inevitably, it is governed by the interests of that country. Enlightened self-interest may take a short view or a long view, and in foreign policy, more than anything else, the short view is dangerous. The speed of events today rather telescopes the short and the long views and therefore the long view becomes even more important. We have tried in India to avoid entanglement in foreign affairs because we are busy with our own problems. But it was a consequence of independence and of India's position in the world that we could not keep away from other problems. More especially, we

are bound up by what happens in Asia. For sometime past, whether in America or Europe or South East Asia, I have been venturing to point out the importance of Asia in the world situation today. That did not mean that any country of Asia had developed material or other kinds of power to influence world events. It meant that the change that had come over Asia by the progressive elimination of colonial control, and the nature of the problems that Asia had to face were of such vital importance, both in peace and war, as to affect the future of the world. The challenge and the conflict have come now in Korea. Korea may be relatively unimportant. It was called, in the old days, the Hermit Kingdom and then it became just a part of the Japanese Empire, struggling for freedom. But what is happening in Korea, it is apparent, affects the world. It may mean world war or it may mean our being for a long time on the verge of world war with all the tension and horror that this involves.

The critics of our policy have been of two kinds. Many of them have objected to our approving the U.N. Security Council's resolutions on Korea because that meant, according to them, an inevitable lining up with a certain group of Powers, notably the U.S.A. The other critics, on the other hand, have said that we have not fully supported the U.N. or the U.S.A. action in the Far East, that we have limited our support and conditioned it and have not jumped into the fray with our defence forces, etc. Thus we have failed to take advantage of any clear-cut policy and are likely to suffer disadvantages from either side.

It seems to me that both these criticisms are misconceived and do not lake all the relevant facts into consideration. We have been following a certain policy in foreign affairs and that policy has undoubtedly brought credit to India and made us in a small way an influence for peace. If we and some other countries did not do so, undoubtedly war would have been much nearer, apart from

the internal difficulties that we might have had to face. We have, in any event, to carry our people with us, and no policy, that has not got large-scale public approval, can be carried on for long. To have changed our old policy at the first touch of harsh fact may have brought approval from some quarters, but it would have been to the great discredit of India and she would have counted for little in the great drama that is taking place. So we tried to adhere to that basic policy, though there was a variation of it under stress of circumstances. . . .

In South Korea, we see that, in spite of a great deal of help given by the U.S.A., the political and social structure was excessively weak and it has cracked up. Indeed, from all accounts that we have had, South Korea was governed by as authoritarian a regime as North Korea, though both were entirely different. Numerous impartial observers have given us accounts of the bad state of affairs in South Korea during the past few months. So, it is difficult to be enthusiastic about South Korea. In Indo-China, we have kept apart from the two contending parties. One of these is supported by the French, and now the U.S.A. have promised military support to the French. Formosa, by a decision taken during the later stages of the War, was part of China. But now obstructions have been placed in the way of Formosa going to China.

All this indicates how a certain policy leads inevitably to the support of weak and reactionary elements in Asia. In the long run that policy cannot succeed because Asia, however weak, is wide awake and in a rebellious mood. It is, therefore, not a wise policy and in effect encourages those very elements to which it is opposed.

Europe and America are far too much used to thinking in terms of military or economic power. There is no doubt that we cannot ignore the force of arms or of money. But it has been repeatedly seen in parts of Asia that there are strict limitations to what arms and money

can do, if they go against the prevailing mood of millions of people. India is in a position to understand these Asian problems much better, not only from the political but also from the psychological point of view, and India is also respected by these countries of Asia because we have no particular axe to grind. Therefore, a heavy responsibility rests upon us to adopt a policy which we consider not only expedient but wise and in keeping with the temper of Asia. To fall blindly in line with others, whoever they may be, is to fall into a trap and to miss the historic destiny of India. What the future holds, nobody can say. But we can at least try to do our best.

*From a letter dated 16 October 1950*

Since I wrote to you last, there has been an appreciable toning down of the tension in the Far East. The situation is still difficult and one cannot rule out the possibility of an extension of the war area. But there is less chance of this now, or at any rate, of a direct conflict between China and the U.N. forces. As you know, we were opposed to the crossing of the 38th parallel by the U.N. forces without making another effort at a peaceful settlement. We felt that after the collapse of the North Korean armies in South Korea, it was worthwhile to make an effort at a peaceful settlement. This was desirable in itself and it was also to be preferred because of the risk of the war spreading and other countries being involved in it. The reports we had received from our Ambassador in China indicated that feeling in China was exasperated and inflamed, because of the repeated refusal of the United Nations to admit the new China and because of fear that the United States was bent on attacking China. The crossing of the 38th parallel appeared to the Chinese Government as another move in the direction of an attack on China itself. I believe there was no justification for thinking that either the United Nations or the U.S.A.

were thinking in terms of an attack on China. But there can be little doubt that the Government of China believed that this was possible and intended sometime or other. They declared quite clearly that they would resist any forces that crossed the 38th parallel.

In view of this, we urged the U.K. and the U.S.A. Governments not to take a sudden step of this kind, as the risk of war spreading was great. In any event, it is always better to exhaust peaceful methods of approach. The U.N., however, at the instance of the U.K. and U.S.A., decided to cross the 38th parallel and issued directions to General MacArthur accordingly. The North Korean forces refused to surrender and have continued to resist. In the existing circumstances, the U.N. forces are bound to drive the North Koreans further towards the Chinese border. Probably the war will change its character and will be more of the nature of guerrilla warfare. This may continue for longer than is expected. It is possible that U.N. forces will not go right up to the Chinese border but will stop some distance away from it, after capturing the North Korean capital. This will avoid any danger of conflict with China. We have little news of what China has done or intends to do. There are some reports that Chinese troops have crossed the border into North Korea and occupied a strip of territory there.

So far as the objective in Korea is concerned, we agree to what the U.N. has declared, that is, the establishment of a free and independent government in United Korea elected by the people. We also agree that these elections should be organized under the auspices of the United Nations. But no one knows when military operations will end. War is easy to start but more difficult to end. Meanwhile, large parts of Korea have been turned into a wilderness and the casualties are very great. Seoul, the capital city, is in ruins. It was to avert or at least to limit this tragedy that we suggested a more peaceful approach after it had been shown that the North Koreans had been defeated in

warfare. I still feel that this was the right approach and the longer this is delayed, the more will new problems arise. When war takes place, it is often forgotten by those who control armies that they are dealing with masses of human beings who have human feelings and human reactions. Old-style warfare confined to some professional armies brought certain results which could, on the whole, be prophesied. But now when there is what is called total war in any country or area, we get mass reactions which poison the future.

We have had reports of atrocities by the North Koreans. We have also had reports of atrocities committed by the South Koreans. Tens of thousands of innocent people have been done to death, quite apart from the military casualties. What is happening in Korea is bad enough from the human point of view; it can serve as an example to us, many times multiplied, of what might happen over large areas of the earth's surface, if world war came.

It seems to me as clear as anything can be that the problem of Korea or of the Far East generally cannot be settled without the concurrence of the two great neighbouring countries—China and the U.S.S.R. Hence our desire to associate them in the U.N. for the solution of this problem. We have opposed or abstained from voting when some resolutions were brought up before the U.N. by the U.S.A. or the U.K. delegations. It seemed to us that the approach of these resolutions was not a good one and did not lead to peace but rather to a preparation for future wars. We have also felt that the United Nations should not become merely a group of nations, however many they might be, lined up together against another group. The whole object of the U.N. was to include all the nations, even though they might differ from each other. There has been much criticism in the United States of our action, although there are many there who appreciate it. I am convinced that the line we have adopted has not only been a right one from the world point of view but also an

advantageous one from India's point of view. Because of various developments and our own reactions to them, India has been thrust in the forefront of international affairs and a great responsibility rests upon her. I earnestly hope that we shall be true to our ideals and not barter them because of fear or some momentary gain at the cost of our larger good. Public memory is short, especially in other countries in regard to India, and passions have been roused which come in the way of clear thinking.

*From a letter dated 1 November 1950*

The outstanding events in foreign affairs during the last fortnight, so far as India is concerned, have been the developments in Tibet. There had been repeated rumours of Chinese troop movements on the Tibetan border since July last and this led us to draw the attention of our Ambassador in Peking and, through him, of the Chinese Government to the desirability of having peaceful negotiations for the settlement of the problem. No precise information was available about these border movements and often they were denied or explained as movements on the other side of the border. There is an intermediate area between China and Tibet proper which China has considered as part of one of her western provinces and in which China had a right by a treaty to keep garrisons. Many of these movements appeared to be in this middle area. Communications are difficult in Tibet and news travels slowly. So, it was not easy to know what was happening.

On our part, we drew the attention of the Chinese Government repeatedly to this matter and pressed them to rely on peaceful methods. They replied that they were prepared for peaceful negotiations and the Tibetan delegates should go to them for this purpose. At the same time, statements were made about an army

being prepared for the 'liberation' of Tibet, and this was publicly announced as early as August last. We had hoped that, in view of our friendly advice as well as the international situation, military operations against Tibet would be avoided. We advised the Tibetan delegates to go to Peking and, after some hesitation, they had agreed to do so.

When news came to us that the Chinese Government had formally announced military operations against Tibet, we were surprised and distressed. Immediately we sent a note of protest and requested the Chinese Government not to proceed with these operations and wait for the Tibetan delegates. Their answer was rather curt and laid stress on Tibet being an integral part of China and thus a domestic affair. No outside country, according to them, had a right to interfere in this domestic matter. They still expressed their willingness for peaceful negotiations, but said nothing about halting the advance of their troops. We have again addressed them on this subject and our correspondence will be published before you get this letter.

I must say that this action of the Chinese Government has hurt us considerably and has appeared to us as an act of discourtesy in view of our prolonged correspondence on this subject. It has also seemed to us an essentially wrong act and one that might well add to the tensions existing in the world. To use coercion and armed force, when a way to peaceful settlement is open, is always wrong. To do so against a country like Tibet, which is obviously not in a position to offer much resistance and which could not injure China, seemed to us to add to the wrongness of this behaviour. From the international point of view, it was bound to react against China's own interests. Why then should she do it? It is not for me to guess, but it seems clear that owing to the development of the war situation in the Far East, and the accounts of repeated bombing of Manchurian towns, the

Chinese Government believed that they were threatened with war by their enemies. A temper arose there full of fear and apprehension and resentment against those real or fancied enemies, and this led possibly to a change in policy or to a speeding up of what might have taken much longer to develop.

Whatever the reason may be and whatever their motives may be, the Chinese Government has, in our opinion, acted not only wrongly but foolishly and done injury to itself, to some extent to us and, I think, to the cause of world peace. As you know, we have consistently tried to be friendly to the new China and have championed her interests in the United Nations and elsewhere. Thus, the new developments must necessarily affect our friendly relations. We do not intend to change our general policy because that is based on certain principles, as well as our judgment of the world situation. We do not even wish to do injury to China in any way, but we shall have to consider carefully every step that we may have to take in the future.

*From a letter dated 17 November 1950*

[R]ecent happenings have made a great difference to the balance of power in the world. The most important factor was the emergence of a strong and centralized China. Whether this was going to be a factor in favour of peace or war, opinions differed. But the fact of its emergence was patent enough and no one could doubt that the old balance had thus been completely upset. To be pushed into prominence in world affairs during these days of crisis is not an unmixed blessing. If China came out as a great power, and a power allied to the Soviets, all previous calculations had to be reconsidered. To us in India and to many other countries in Asia, this had a particular significance. This significance was partly due to the fact that a great country, under the leadership of Communists, was playing an

important role in Asia. The forces allied to communism thus gained a great adhesion in strength. But the frequent reference to communism in this, as in other, contexts is apt to make us overlook other long-term factors. One of these, of particular importance to India, was the approach of the Chinese power to the Indian frontier. In Asia, apart from the Soviet territories, India and China are the biggest and potentially the strongest countries. Both of them have played a great role in the past and have influenced their neighbour countries. The influence of each overlapped the others' in large areas, but there was no basic conflict between them. Each of these vast countries was a world in itself and though they had a great deal of trouble often enough, this was mostly confined to their borders, except when some invader came across them. Even so both had a tremendous capacity to absorb those invaders and make them lose themselves in the sea of Indian or Chinese humanity. The power of assimilation of both these countries was tremendous. They did not come into conflict with each other, nor was there ever a real test of how they would affect each other culturally and in other ways, if their interests clashed. In South East Asia, both functioned and both left permanent marks of their influence. Yet, there is no record of conflict between those cultural and other influences. There was a process of adjustment, in varying degrees, in each country of South East Asia.

It is a fact to be noted and remembered that during this long period of history, India and China were never really at war, although there were some petty conflicts. Partly, of course, this was due to their distance, for even though their borders touched each other, they yet remained far, and there was the great Himalayan barrier. But there was something more to it than that. Both, as a whole, were peaceful nations, proud of their heritage and content with it, looking upon others with a certain condescension as at younger and less-developed people. . . .

The developments in Tibet rather suddenly made people realize that China might have a long common frontier with India, and this new China was probably very different from the old. Also the Himalayan barrier was not quite so effective as it used to be. What would happen when China, with its new-born strength and dynamism and a certain aggressiveness, came right up to the borders of India? Would there be peace between the two or tension and conflict? Even apart from communism, this new question faced us in the future. The addition of communism added to its gravity, because many people feared infiltration of communist ideas even more than the attack of armed men. . . .

Whatever our relations with China may be in the present or the future, it is of high importance that we should understand her. We see something there, which is the result of nearly forty years of incessant struggle and war. These wars ruined China to a very large extent. But they also moulded it anew, and something came out of them, which is tough and hard. Has this something lost its basic Chinese character or does that national individuality, for which China and the Chinese have been famous through the ages, still endure? In any event, what was this new amalgam like? The fate of Asia and even of the world was going to be powerfully affected by it. It was not enough to like it or dislike it. It was a fact to be realized and understood. Because of this patent fact, we felt that recognition of this new Government was the right course. But something much more than recognition was necessary; we had to understand it. . . .

It seemed to us that in this new shape of things, it was important for India and China to have friendly relations, if that was possible. Anything else would, in the long run, have been bad not only for our two countries but for Asia as a whole. Whether it was possible for the two countries to have friendly relations in the present context of things, was not clear. But the attempt had to be made in the interests

not only of the present but of the future. That should not have involved any interference with each other. It could only have been undertaken in a spirit of broad tolerance and understanding and in the belief that the larger interests of our respective countries as well as of humanity demanded it. . . .

The Korean war brought new complications and both these countries had to give answers, from day to day, to difficult questions. We considered it in the larger context of aggression and world peace; China was more intimately affected because the struggle was across her borders and it seemed to her as a kind of possible prelude to some attack on her own independence. Her sympathies were entirely with the North Koreans, because both had come out of the same school. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the conflict would not spread and, on the whole, China remained calm. The collapse of the North Korean armies rather suddenly altered the situation, and immediately the question arose of the crossing of the 38th parallel. This invisible and artificial line became a symbol and China reacted violently to the possibility of the line being crossed. There can be no doubt now that what she said at the time, she meant, and that she felt that her own security was threatened. We received her messages, clear and explicit, and we passed them on to the other Great Powers. We saw that apart from the rights and wrongs of the question, world war hung in the balance and no risks could be taken with it. Risks however were taken and it was said that all this had been bluff. India had plenty of critics in the Western world and we were considered very simple and naive in the art of politics to be taken in so easily by a few threats. Now the world sees that it was something more than bluff or a threat and a new and much more difficult situation has arisen.

While all this was happening in North Korea, Tibet came into prominence. China's forces entered it and we learnt of this with

surprise and some resentment. It seemed to us not quite fair on the part of the Chinese Government to take this step after all that we had said to them and they had said to us on this subject. It also seemed to us as totally unjustified, for Tibet could be no danger to China and Tibet was willing to have peaceful negotiations. There was also the imminent danger of this little spark helping the fire to spread. We wondered what China's real attitude towards India was. Did she care so little for the friendship of India as to flout our wishes deliberately? Was she really in such a mood for aggressive tactics as not to care for any consequences? It is difficult to peep into the mind of a people during moments of crisis, when they fear their own security threatened. But, looking at it from any point of view, this invasion of Tibet was wrong and foolish. India naturally resented it and our new-born attempts at friendship suffered a blow. That feeling of resentment still remains and a certain apprehension is added to it. I do not think that there is any near danger to our frontiers and in any event we are not so weak as to be frightened. Nevertheless, we have to become more frontier-conscious and to take all reasonable steps to guard the mountain passes, which lead to our country. But there is no reason for people to get hysterical or even excited about this matter.

About Tibet, we still hope that she may retain her autonomy and we shall work for it through diplomatic means; there are no more effective means available. About our frontier, the McMahon Line,* we are adamant and we are not going to tolerate any breach of it. Other questions, such as our mission at Lhasa and our trade posts

* The watershed boundary of about 850 miles between India and Tibet was formalized at Shimla in 1914 between India, Tibet and China. It was known as the McMahon Line after the representative of the Government of India, Sir Henry McMahon (1862–1949).

elsewhere, will depend on circumstances. We are not going to war over them.

Looking again at the historical perspective, it is to the interests of Western Powers to prevent China and India getting too friendly. Oddly enough, I think that such friendliness is not to the liking of the Soviet Union also. Therefore, a certain encouragement is given by these Powers to anything which may spoil our relations. We have to face a difficult and delicate situation, both in Tibet and in Korea. We do so, as we have repeatedly proclaimed, by pursuing a somewhat detached policy and judging each issue on the merits. We shall continue to do so, though undoubtedly the developments in Tibet have been a blow to our policy.

*From a letter dated 31 August 1951*

India's decision not to sign the treaty [of peace with Japan, signed in San Francisco] has a peculiar and far-reaching significance. Because of this fact, considerable irritation has been caused in official circles in the United States at our decision. Indeed the reply of the U.S. Government was couched in language which is not usual in correspondence between Governments.* I confess that we were

* The United States government regretting India's decision to make a separate peace treaty with Japan said in its note of 26 August that there can be no united action for peace unless the nations 'are willing to accept what to each may seem imperfections' in one another. It showed surprise that India considered the treaty incapable of restoring the honour and equality among the comity of free nations to Japan when in fact the treaty had been accepted by Japan. The note claimed to see a 'discrepancy' in the Indian government's stand on Taiwan. It also accused India of applying 'different tests' to Kurile and the Ryukyus islands, for while India wanted the transfer of sovereignty of Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union, it criticized U.N. trusteeship of Ryukyus Islands under the United States authority.

somewhat irritated at it, but after much thought, we decided not to use strong language in our reply.* . . .

Our general policy is not intended to side with any group or country or to oppose any group or country for opposition's sake. We have tried, in spite of difficulties and misunderstandings, to keep friendly relations with rival countries. We have had a large measure of success in this. But the issues that come up repeatedly have to be judged from the wider point of view of war and peace in the world. Unfortunately, because of fear, the Western countries are inclined more and more towards fascist and military elements in Germany, Japan, Spain, etc. The rearmament of Germany under the old leadership, and the proposed rearmament of Japan, also under the old military leadership, are being encouraged. This is a dangerous trend, which would do little good even to America. In any event, what is happening is that extreme elements on both sides are coming to the front. On the Russian side, we find Communist expansionism; on the other side, we find reactionary elements joining together. The middle groups tend to disappear. India cannot line up with the Soviet or the other Communist countries, nor can it line up with these militarist and fascist groups. It is difficult to live in splendid isolation. But, in effect, India is not isolated and a wide circle of people all over the world welcome the general policy we are pursuing and think of it as something that gives hope for the prevention of war. In spite of our desire to remain aloof of international entanglements, a certain leadership is thrust upon India in pursuing the policy we have adopted which has a large appeal to considerable numbers of people abroad, more especially in Asia.

* In its reply of 26 August 1951, the Indian government merely reiterated India's 'inherent and unquestionable right' not to sign the treaty and said that the separate treaty with Japan would not run counter to the main provisions of the draft treaty to be signed at San Francisco.

*From a letter dated 4 May 1952*

The Tunisian affair, important as it is from the point of view of freedom from colonial domination, has assumed a larger significance, chiefly at our instance. It seemed to us very extraordinary that the request made by a very large number of Asian and African countries, supported by some Latin American countries, for a discussion of the issue in the Security Council, was turned down by that Council. Quite apart from the merits of the case, this is a serious matter because it affects the whole future of the United Nations. This question shows, more than ever, that the United Nations Organization is gradually undergoing a vital change from what it used to be. It was started as an organization in which all the nations of the world would have some measure of free play. It was to be a universal forum. It was true that existing facts were recognized by laying down that Great Powers would have a veto in certain matters. This might appear illogical, but it was a recognition of the factual situation, as it was not possible to have sanctions against a Great Power without provoking world war. The United Nations, as an organ of peace, avoided this danger by the provision of the veto and in the hope that discussions round the Council table would themselves be a powerful factor in preventing war.

The attempt, successful thus far, to keep the new China out of the United Nations was the first major step in lessening the universality of the United Nations. In doing so facts were also ignored, because essentially the new China was not only a stable and well-established fact, but was also rapidly becoming a great power. Because of this the U.N. became something less than it was, and this great organization, meant for peace, was itself dragged into war. It is true that aggression had to be resisted. But the drift continued and the division of the world into power blocs, one of which was connected with the United Nations, developed. The Atlantic Pact was meant for the defence of

the Atlantic community. This now includes countries like Turkey and Greece which are very far from the Atlantic. Also the Atlantic Pact gradually becomes not only one to ensure the defence of certain countries bordering on the Atlantic, but also appears to become a guarantor of their colonial possessions. Thus, the United Nations becomes indirectly a protector of existing forms of colonialism. In theory, this may not be so, and indeed the Charter lays down completely different principles, but, in practice, there is this gradual change and reorientation.

The Tunisian issue illustrates, rather vividly, this latest development. There can be no doubt that Tunisia is a clear example of a national movement opposed to a colonial power. But this simple issue becomes entangled with the rivalries of great nations and, as a consequence, some of these great nations line up with the colonial power against the national movement. But quite apart from the merits of this question, it does appear extraordinary that even a discussion in the Security Council should be prevented. Thus, the desires of practically every country in Asia and Africa and some in South America are ignored and bypassed. The position of these countries, representing more than half the population of the world, becomes embarrassing in the United Nations, and the United Nations appears to become more and more a vehicle for the decisions of one or two or three Great Powers. Whatever reasons of expediency might be advanced to justify this development, it cannot possibly be good in the long run. The best of reasons do not justify a wrong course. The future of the United Nations is affected by this.

*From a letter dated 16 June 1952*

It is important that we should be clear about our foreign policy. Some people imagined that there was some shift of it or some variation.

As a matter of fact, we have adhered to our policy and we intend to continue to do so. People, judging from some odd incident, come to wrong conclusions. If we take aid from the United States of America or are otherwise friendly to them, we are said to incline towards that particular group of nations in the Cold War that is going on. If we send a cultural mission to China and express our appreciation of some of the activities of the new regime in China, we are said to have inclined towards the other group of nations. As a matter of fact, we try our best, within the limits of our policy, to be friendly and co-operative with the countries of both these groups. We have intimate relations—political, cultural and economic—with the United Kingdom. That is not a legacy from the past but is to our interest today. Our whole political structure is largely fashioned after that of the United Kingdom. We use their language extensively. It is natural, therefore, that those connections should continue. That does not mean in the slightest that we subordinate ourselves to the U.K. in any way. Even the Commonwealth relationship does not lessen in the slightest our complete independence of policy or action, as can be seen by anybody who is acquainted with current affairs.

It surprises me that some people imagine that we have gone back on our past professions by being associated with the Commonwealth. Long ago we determined to become not only independent, but a Republic. We have fulfilled our pledge. For the Republic of India to associate itself with any country or group of countries by a formal alliance, even though this involved certain commitments, would not be considered as something coming in the way of our independence. Our association with the Commonwealth is far less than such an alliance might have been. It is completely informal and there are no commitments. It brings us certain advantages and there is no reason whatever, so far as I can see, why we should give it up. Where our

policy differs from that of the U.K. or any other member of the Commonwealth, we pursue our policy. In regard to one member of the Commonwealth, South Africa, we have not even got diplomatic relations and there has been some kind of a conflict. In international affairs our association with the U.K. and the Commonwealth has led far more to our influencing them in a particular direction than their influencing us.

With the United States of America, our associations are also fairly close, though not as close as those with the U.K. We trade with them. We have received help from them and we have many students there. As I have pointed out previously, there is always a certain risk involved in receiving substantial help from any one country. Therefore we have to be careful. It would be folly not to receive the help we so badly need, because we cannot rely upon ourselves.

With the U.S.S.R., our contacts are friendly but not close, that is, we have not got much business or other dealings. That is not because we avoid such dealings, but because, in the nature of things, it is more difficult for us to deal with them. Where an opportunity offers, we take it. With China, partly the same considerations apply. But I think it is true that a variety of circumstances pull India and China towards each other, in spite of differences of forms of government. This is the long pull of geography and history and, if I may add, of the future. I do not see why we should be alarmed at this. Here also we should be careful. All this means that we should look at current history in some perspective of both the past and the future. There is far too much entanglement with the present with all its passions and conflicts for most countries to develop this perspective. We claim no special virtue for ourselves. But, situated as we are, we are perhaps in a better position to look at things at long range and fashion our policy accordingly. . . .

*From a letter dated 10 September 1952*

The King of Nepal recently visited Delhi. . . .

Nepal is rather a significant example of a country trying to build up a democratic structure without adequate preparation or background for it. After a hundred years of absolute autocracy and authoritarian government, suddenly the people of Nepal sense freedom and the bonds fall away. This heady wine goes to their heads and leads not to a disciplined exercise of that freedom, but to the development of all kinds of disruptive forces and petty groups, each pulling in its own direction. The Nepali Congress was the one major organization and was thus a stabilizing factor. The other stabilizing factor was the King. Unfortunately, the Nepali Congress itself has split up into three or four groups. It is immaterial which group is the biggest, because this process of splitting up weakens the organization all over the country and permits rather reactionary groups, like the Gurkha League, to grow in relative importance.

The fact is that unity in a country is very much dependent upon certain physical factors, such as communications. Where there is a lack of communications and it takes long to go from one part to another, the governmental apparatus is weak and even organized national movements do not function effectively. Local officers have a large discretion and may behave or misbehave with impunity. Local popular leaders are thrown up and they are not under the discipline of a larger movement. Nepal lacks communications utterly, except for the small valley where Kathmandu is situated. That is the physical weakness of Nepal at present, apart from lack of trained personnel in any department of public activity. Then there are different types of people who pull, to some extent, in different directions. There are the Newars, people of the valley; there are the hill people, the Gurkhas; and there are the people of the Terai, adjoining India. These

last named, the people of the Terai, are physically and culturally the nearest to India and have been influenced by our national movements to some extent. The Gurkhas have been cut off in the hills; the Newars have played a fairly important part in recent political changes in Nepal, because they happen to be in the capital and round about and are in a position to influence developments more than the others. But if the others wake up, they make a great difference. And this process of waking up has started. Because of this there is a complete lack of balance in Nepal at present. Our attempts in the past year and a half have been to maintain some kind of a balance. But, unfortunately, petty personal rivalries have again upset that balance. It is not because we interfered in Nepal, but because circumstances made it inevitable that the King had to take charge of the administration. There was, for the moment, no group strong enough to do so. Even now the position appears to be that if one group is put in charge of the administration, another equally strong group or groups would probably oppose it and create trouble. In the circumstances, the King had to take charge and since he has done so, there is a measure of quiet in the country and what little has been done already has, on the whole, been appreciated. Of course, there is opposition and criticism.

I have mentioned above the importance of communications. The dominant factor of the age today, all over the world, is the tremendous improvement in communications of various kinds. It is this which has made the world much more closely knit together than ever before. It is this which gives far greater facilities for peaceful progress as well as for wholesale destruction. Indeed, the alternative before the world appears to be one or the other, or to put it differently, the development ultimately of some kind of a world order based on free nations co-operating together or world dominion by one mighty power. Of course, there is a third possibility and that is just chaos after tremendous destruction. Indeed, even the attempt to achieve world

dominion by any one great power would lead to this destruction and chaos, whatever the ultimate result might be. . . .

The development of communications makes it easier to tackle a problem. By itself, it does not solve the problem. The problem essentially remains an economic one, of finding work and employment, of greater production, of greater wealth and greater capacity for capital formation and investment and thus a more rapid pace of development. That pace is unfortunately limited in countries like India because we have little surplus to throw into investment. Nevertheless, we have to increase that pace and find some way to do it. If orthodox methods come in the way, then other methods have to be adopted. The world today witnesses some kind of a race not only between nations, but also between various forces within a nation as well as in the world. The slow of pace lag behind and might go to the wall. The essential unity of the world that has developed because of the tremendous advancement in communications brings its dangers also and all these various forces impinge one upon the other all the time.

*From a letter dated 4 December 1952*

The major event of the last fortnight in the international field has been our Korean resolution in the United Nations. This has already been passed by an overwhelming majority in the Political Committee and no doubt it will be passed by the General Assembly also. The majority is very big and yet I am not happy over the situation. It has been our belief ever since the Korean trouble started that peace could only be established there with the consent of the major parties concerned. Indeed the big blunder committed by some countries, notably the U.S.A., in refusing to recognize the new China, has been one of the principal reasons for all that has followed. It was patent that peace

in the Far East could only be established by some agreement of the major powers interested and among these were obviously China and the U.S.S.R. Because of this we refused to ally ourselves with attempts to condemn China and call it an aggressor. This did not mean going towards a settlement but rather towards greater conflict.

Therefore, what matters in the Far East is not a majority in the U.N., but the general agreement among the Western and Eastern Powers concerned. Unfortunately China has not accepted our resolution and as for the U.S.S.R., their representative at the U.N. has used very strong language against it. The language perhaps might be discounted a little, as this has become a habit. But the fact remains that the Soviet Union and China are opposed to this resolution and without their consent there will not be peace in Korea.

Why then did we proceed with this resolution? For two reasons: One was that not to do so would have meant a bad and aggressive resolution being passed which would have worsened the situation greatly. The other is that our resolution, though not accepted by China, still leaves the door open for a settlement or at least a consideration of the problem on a new basis. It is after all a recommendation. We could not possibly withdraw that resolution at a later stage when such a large number of countries had supported it and it had evoked a remarkable peace sentiment in the United Nations. Whether we could withdraw it or not in the strict legal sense, I do not know. But a withdrawal would have meant the giving up almost of hope for the future and would have brought much discredit upon us. We had, therefore, to proceed with it in the best manner possible. You will have seen that we have refrained from using any harsh words and have tried to maintain the debate on a friendly level in spite of the strong language used against us by the Soviets.

I must confess that I was surprised at the attitude of China and the virulence of Russia in this matter. Right from the beginning

we have kept in close touch with China over this affair. For months past we have been communicating with them and trying to explore some way out. The Chinese Government, as indeed the U.K., more especially, and partly the U.S.A., encouraged us. We did not wish to take any step which might embarrass either party. We had thus to proceed cautiously. The Chinese Government, even a short time ago, definitely asked us to continue our efforts. That, of course, did not mean any commitment on their part to any particular course and they always laid the greatest stress on their objection to what is called 'voluntary repatriation'. Our object was to find some honourable and reasonable way which should be acceptable to both parties. We proceeded on various suggestions thrown out from time to time from China as well as some of the Western countries.

The first step we took was to formulate certain principles on which our resolution should be based. These principles were discussed in New York by our delegation with representatives of some of the more important countries, notably the U.K., U.S.A., and the U.S.S.R. China, of course, was not there, but we communicated these principles to the Chinese Government. They did not give us any reply and did not commit themselves in any way. But we certainly gathered an impression that they were not opposed to them. Indeed, the absence of a reply for many days itself led us to this conclusion.

At a later stage we drafted that resolution formally basing it on those principles. Immediately, we communicated this full resolution to the Chinese Government. Again there was no quick response. Meanwhile, the resolution leaked out through the U.S.A. Government and an American spokesman rejected it even before it was moved. The U.K., however, strongly supported it and so did many other countries. In fact, the U.S.A. was rather isolated and was compelled to change its attitude to a large extent because of the powerful support that our resolution got in the U.N. and the general peace sentiment

that it had raised there. For the first time, the U.K. and the U.S.A. had openly disagreed on a vital issue.

All this time there was silence on the part of the Soviet Union and China. Our delegation then made some very minor changes, of little importance, in the resolution to meet, to some extent, the objections raised by the U.S.A. Even so we rejected many points that the U.S.A. pressed on us. Possibly this attempt somewhat to meet the U.S.A. irritated the Soviet Union.

But, in reality, the causes lay much deeper and, for contrary reasons, the U.S.S.R., and some powerful sections in the U.S.A., were not at all anxious for a settlement that did no violence to their own basic position. One gets the impression that China's final attitude was partly at least governed by Soviet advice or pressure.

*From a letter dated 28 April 1955*

The Asian-African Conference was a world event which had attracted great attention. Every country in the world was following it closely and, sometimes, with apprehension. Many observers from other countries had come here in some capacity or other. Some intelligence men had come as delegates. The U.S.A. had some time ago opened a new department for this purpose and had collected their Far Eastern experts. They had also added considerably to their staff of the Indonesian Embassy. Many odd individuals had also come to watch from outside and meet delegates. These included representatives of freedom movements in colonial territories as well as men and women from the big powers.

The delegates who came represented every view, political or other. Some were definitely committed to either NATO or SEATO and were thus parts of the American system of military pacts and alliances. They had been fully briefed for the occasion and took up,

almost in detail, the American line. Two countries, namely China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Viet Minh), were Communist.

India and Burma took up an independent line according to their policy. Indonesia and Egypt usually supported them. Most of the other countries represented were keenly interested in some local problem and had rather vague ideas about world issues. Sometimes, they appeared to agree with India's line, but seemed to be under pressure not to go too far. Many of these countries either receive aid from America or look forward to receiving it.

The Prime Minister of China, Chou En-lai, attracted the most attention, both in public and in the conference. This was natural as he was not only playing a great part in the crisis of the Far East but was rather a mysterious figure whom people had not seen. He conducted himself with ability and moderation in the conference and its committees. Whenever he spoke, he did so with authority. He took particular pains to meet delegates and went to many parties given by heads of delegations. He had private talks also with them. He did not put forward any important proposal but objected to something if it seemed to him to be opposed to any principle for which he stood. He was obviously anxious that the conference should succeed and, therefore, tried to be as accommodating as possible. He was patient even when he had to put up with rather offensive behaviour, which sometimes happened. Only once did he lose his temper for a short while in a committee and said that China would not be bullied. He had naturally more intimate contacts with India and Burma. Altogether, he created a very good impression on the delegates who were impressed by him. Even those who were entirely opposed to him and tried to irritate him by their behaviour were definitely impressed by him. They said so. At a private meeting of a few heads of delegations, he was asked many questions about Formosa, Korea, Tibet and communism, etc. He came out well from

that questioning and even some of his greatest opponents, who were present, realized that his case was not a bad one.

Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Iran were the most aggressive in the conference and in the committees. They represented fully, and sometimes rather aggressively, the pure American doctrine. Thailand and the Philippines fully supported them but in a quieter way. Ceylon also was inclined that way but was rather quiet except for one speech in which the Prime Minister criticized Soviet domination of East European countries.

The Egyptian Prime Minister played an important role in committees and helped in arriving at compromises. Syria and Afghanistan also played a considerable part. Jordan and Saudi Arabia were on the whole moderate.

Probably the most aggressive of the delegations were those of Turkey and Pakistan, though Iraq and Lebanon ran them close in this respect.

[The Burmese Prime Minister] U Nu, as is usual with him, did not make long speeches, but what he said was pertinent and obviously sincere. He made a good impression. On behalf of India, I spoke three times at some length in the Political Committee and also spoke at the closing session of the Open Conference. I dealt not only with the particular points raised by resolutions but also with the basic approach and philosophy of India's foreign policy. I think those speeches created an impression and made delegates think.

In the Political Committee of the conference and its sub-committees, there were long and exhausting discussions. As I have said, Premier Chou En-lai was very accommodating and he did not bring up any controversial issue. His object was to get an agreement. The object of Pakistan and Turkey especially appeared to be to create as many obstacles as possible. They did not seem to be much interested in agreement or in the success of the Conference. Indeed,

at one occasion in a committee, Pakistan threatened to prevent any agreement being reached and therefore the conference [risked] failing. It must be remembered that there was no question of decisions by majority voting. In fact, unanimity was the rule. This made it easier for a small group to stop progress.

With this background, it can well be realized how difficult it was to arrive at any conclusions. The fact, therefore, that ultimately we issued a joint communique which was unanimously agreed to is remarkable. Some of us would have liked this communique to be somewhat different, but we were anxious to succeed and agreed to many things. The conference thus represented a headlong conflict of ideas, forcefully expressed, and at the same time an amazing capacity to find some common ground and decide ultimately unanimously. It may be, of course, that people carried away reservations in their minds.

Taking an overall view of the picture, it seems to me that the conference was a remarkable success. Quite apart from the joint communique issued, it represented the coming together of all these varied and differing nations, their delegates getting to know each other and learning something from each other and finding ultimately that, in spite of so many differences, they had much in common. Thus a feeling of common purposes among the Asian and African countries became more and more evident. We should not imagine that all is well in Asia or Africa, or that our differences have been resolved. I have no doubt that they would be dissolved but for external pressure and military pacts and financial aid and the like. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that we have gone some way towards helping the creation of this common feeling among these countries. What is even more important is the psychological impact of this conference on the peoples of Asia and Africa and also in Europe and America. This impact, though imponderable, will have far-reaching consequences.

*From a letter dated 20 July 1955*

It does not need any proof to say that in the Soviet Union there is no civil liberty as we know it or as the term implies. For persons who oppose the present regime publicly, there is no safety and they are likely to be punished in some way or other or detained. The political structure of the government and administration is quite different from such as we are used to, and it is a little difficult to understand it or appreciate it because of this great difference. It is equally difficult for us to take an objective view of it because of our own habits of thought.

So far as the economic structure is concerned, it might be said to be a completely new experiment in human organization. The only way to consider it objectively is to forget or set aside the coercive technique of communism and try to understand it purely as an economic system. But in order to have some real understanding of the background in the Soviet Union, two facts have to be borne in mind. One is obviously the historical background of that vast area: the autocratic regime before the Revolution, the complete lack of civil liberty then, the backwardness of the country and more especially of the agricultural classes, the continuation of the serfdom till a period almost in living memory. Conditions of course in the past differed greatly in various parts of the U.S.S.R. In Central Asian parts of it, there was even greater backwardness. It was out of this past that the Soviet Union emerged.

The second very important fact to remember is that ever since the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, the leaders and the people of the Soviet Union have had the sensation of being surrounded by danger and by hostile forces. During this period, they have passed through two major wars, a civil war and intervention by foreign powers, apart from internal problems and difficulties. The first ten

years were a period of World War I, civil war, and intervention. The Soviet Union was in some ways at the lowest ebb in the middle twenties. Then started a period of building up, the Five Year Plans, etc. By the end of the thirties came the Second World War which spread to the Soviet Union a little later and brought terrific destruction both of life and property. Much that had been built up during the previous decade was destroyed. Soon after the Second World War ended began the 'Cold War' with its ever-impending threat of developing into World War III. . . .

Thus, ever since the Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union has experienced what might be called a war psychosis. We know the effects of war on a country engaged in such a war. Even highly democratic countries suppress many of their civil liberties at the time of war, and many kinds of compulsions, including military compulsion, become part of the daily routine. If, therefore, we are to understand the psychological background of the Soviet Union not only now but during the past thirty-eight years of its existence, we must consider it as if it was under the strain of war or fear of war, which resulted not only in affecting its policy towards other countries but also in limiting normal freedoms within the Union itself. From time to time, there have been spy scares and many people, including probably large numbers of innocent persons, have suffered. All this, arising from fear, creates a certain psychology which throws up a particular type of person. We have had some very hard and cruel leaders in the Soviet Union, the latest admitted example being that of Beria. All this has prevented the establishment of what might be called normal conditions. Every revolution, big or small, gradually settles down. The gains of the revolution or many of them are retained, and excesses of the revolution fade away. The great French Revolution went through terrific excesses. It was followed by a counter-revolution and Napoleon. Later, France, while retaining

many of the gains of that Revolution, became one of the most staid and conservative countries of Europe. The Soviet Union apparently never had a full chance to settle down in this way, and therefore the return to normality has been delayed.

To refer back to the French Revolution again. The ideals of the French Revolution powerfully affected Europe for a hundred years. Nearly sixty years after that Revolution, there was what is called a Year of Revolutions in Europe—1848. Those revolutions were more or less suppressed. But those ideals of the French Revolution persisted and gradually brought about, in different ways, great changes in Europe. Italy became free, a new Germany arose, and so on. Oddly enough, even while the French Revolution was taking place, it was slightly out-of-date, in the sense that it ignored a vaster revolution that was creeping across Western Europe—the Industrial Revolution. So, in the nineteenth century, the political and human ideals of the French Revolution as well as the new industrial societies being created by the industrial revolution began to shape Western Europe and America. Russia was outside the scope of both. . . .

[In the U.S.S.R.] a curious and a unique combination of events brought about the success of the revolution and the application of an economic theory as well as a technique of action. That economic theory, Marxism, was largely based on a remarkable study of industrial conditions in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. The technique of action was derived from certain forces at work in Europe then and certain incidents such as that of the Paris Commune. It is well-known that Marx did not envisage the application of his methods in a backward country like Russia. But the combination of a corrupt, inefficient and played out autocracy, defeat in war and the misery that came in its train, the breakdown of the administration and economic system, and a brilliant leader, Lenin, led to that success. . . .

The Soviet Union, after the Second World War, was in a position of great strength in Eastern Europe. It had probably some of the old Czarist ambitions to spread out, more especially over the Slav areas. It had also the desire to protect itself in the future by having as many friendly countries as possible next to its borders. The easiest way to have a friendly country appeared to them to have a Communist regime there under their patronage. Some small countries like Latvia and Lithuania were just absorbed. It was difficult for these small countries to exist by themselves in the modern world. They had to be under some big power's patronage and Russia was nearest and took them into its lap. The possession of Germany was a big prize for both the major contestants. In the result it was divided.

Instead of this extension of the Soviet power giving it greater security, it led to more difficult problems and conflicts. The fears and apprehensions of the Western countries at the expansion of the Soviet power led them to organize themselves not only in Europe but practically all over the world. The 'Cold War' began. At the same time, scientific and technological developments led to atomic weapons and hydrogen bombs. Both major groups started a race for rearmament and, more especially, for the development of these new methods of mass slaughter. To begin with, the Soviet Union was very strong on land, while the Western Allies were strong in the air. Gradually, the Soviet Union caught up in the air and perhaps even went ahead and even in regard to the hydrogen bombs it made great progress. Meanwhile, a chain of over two hundred bases was established by the Western Allies, chiefly by the United States of America, all round the Soviet Union and China, right from the Arctic Sea downwards. Also, the question of German rearmament was taken up.

Thus, while on the one hand the great power of the Soviet Union frightened the Western countries, the Soviet Union itself was equally frightened by this chain of atomic bases and even more so by the

prospect of German rearmament. It must be remembered that twice in our own life-time Russia and the Eastern European countries have been overrun by German armies and the people in these countries have vivid memories of the vast suffering and destruction caused by these armies. In addition, there were the horrible concentration camps with gas chambers where an International Commission found that millions of people, chiefly Jews, were done to death. I saw one of these in Poland and it was a horrible and almost unbearable sight. Thus all over Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia, there is fear of German rearmament. There is that fear also in France which has suffered three German invasions within eighty years. France had a double fear: that of the Soviet on one side and of a rearmed Germany on the other, and French policies have been torn between these two fears.

Thus the world has gradually drifted towards the verge of war in Europe over the question of Germany and German rearmament. In the Far East the situation has become even more explosive. But at the same time a realization has come to peoples in all countries and even their leaders and rulers that a new world war would be something unimaginably destructive and ruinous. That fear has acted as a salutary check and perhaps has been instrumental in turning men's minds to the quest of peace as perhaps never before. For people in Europe especially, whether in the East or the West, war is something that they know and have suffered from. They do not want it again. . . .

As I have said, there is no civil liberty as we know it. But I rather doubt if this lack of civil liberty is felt by the great majority of the people. This is so partly because they have not known civil liberty at any time and partly because in every country people are more concerned with their living conditions than with abstract notions of civil liberty. I suppose there are many people in the Soviet Union who may be dissatisfied with things as they are. But the general impression

I got was one of contentment, as practically everyone is occupied and busy and no one seems to get much time for complaining, or if there are complaints, they are about relatively minor matters.

It must be remembered that practically everyone under fifty in Russia, that is, almost the entire active population, has grown up under the Soviet system and has been fully conditioned by it, not only by propaganda but much more so by his entire environment. Some old people might complain or think of the good old days but I doubt very much if there is any marked desire in the Soviet Union for a reversion to the old days. Indeed, I do not think it is conceivable that any major change can take place in the economic system. There may be, and probably will be, minor changes and adaptations, but the basic economic structure in industry and land will continue. In establishing this structure and, more especially, in collectivization of land, a tremendous price in human suffering was paid. That price has been paid and a completely new structure has arisen and been well established. There can be no going back upon this. This may not apply to some of the other Communist countries of Eastern Europe where the changes have been more recent.

We thus see in the Soviet Union a new type of society growing up. It is a vital society, expanding not only in numbers and in the construction of new towns and cities and factories, etc., but fully conditioned to believe in the environment in which it lives. This society is becoming increasingly technical and fairly well-read. Its standards will necessarily go up with increasing production, provided there are no wars or big upsets. How far political restriction and lack of civil liberties will continue, I cannot say. I imagine that if fear of war and attack goes, there will be a progressive approach to normality and a measure of individual freedom may also come in its train. I do not think this will lead to the type of individual freedom that is known in some of the countries of the West, but a well-read and well-

trained society is not likely to submit for long to many restrictions on individual freedom.

I am not discussing communism, either its technique or its ideology but rather thinking in terms of the gradual development of the Soviet people under pressure of various events. Marxism as applied to Russia by Lenin was probably somewhat different from what Marx himself thought. Stalin varied this still more, and I have no doubt that this process of variation will continue in the Soviet Union to suit changing circumstances. In non-Communist countries, the Communist parties are rigid and out of touch with changing reality. There is no such compulsion in the Soviet Union as the high priests of communism there are free to give any interpretation. The essential basis of a socialist or a communist society will, I think, remain but its outer structure may change from time to time. Also, if normality comes in, there is no reason to expect a continuance of Communist aggressiveness and interference elsewhere. There is of course always a tendency for a great power to be expansive and to try to impose its will on others.

*From a letter dated 2 August 1955*

Broadly speaking, the two major problems in so far as the world situation is concerned, are those of Germany in Europe and the complex of Far Eastern problems—Korea, Formosa and Indo-China. Because of various developments in Europe, more especially in Germany, the Western bloc is in a relatively stronger position compared to the Soviet bloc. In the Far East, however, this position is reversed and China and her allies are in a relatively stronger position both politically and militarily, chiefly because of geography. Because of this, the United States is anxious to give priority to the German problem and to leave the Far Eastern problem untouched,

hoping for something to happen in the course of the next few years. It is hardly conceivable, however, that the position in the Far East can be left as it is for any length of time. It is possible, however, that if the coastal islands, Quemoy and Matsu, are handed over to China peacefully, then the situation in the Far East will tone down and cease to be one of acute tension. The problem will remain, but it can be dealt with at some leisure. It is quite possible that the Formosan problem will tend to solve itself by Chiang Kai-shek and his group gradually fading out. The ultimate solution can only be for Formosa or Taiwan to go to China. No Chinese Government can tolerate a hostile power in Formosa and both history and cultural contacts support the Chinese claim. The great majority of the Formosans are Chinese-speaking people from the Fukien Province of China. Very probably, the Formosans would like some kind of self-government and it is conceivable that when they become part of the Chinese State, a measure of autonomy might be granted to them.

The only practical course at present in regard to Formosa, therefore, is that the coastal islands should be evacuated by the Chiang Kai-shek forces and peacefully transferred to the People's Government of China. This is the course advocated by the U.K. Government and some other governments, and it is in this direction that India's efforts have been directed in our informal talks in Peking, London, Ottawa and Washington. Washington has resisted this because of its alliance with Chiang Kai-shek. But even that alliance is not really affected by Quemoy and Matsu being handed over. The real result of this handing over would be a loss in Chiang Kai-shek's prestige and morale. If world tensions continue to decrease, one may look forward to this process of transfer of Quemoy and Matsu to China, though one should not underestimate the difficulties ahead as there are powerful Chiang Kai-shek lobbies in America.

A very important aspect of the Far Eastern problem is the inclusion of the People's Government of China in the United Nations as well as in the Security Council. The United States have all along taken a very strong attitude opposing this, but world opinion has veered round considerably in this matter. At the tenth anniversary session of the United Nations in San Francisco in June last, there were many favourable references to the inclusion of China even from those who had opposed it in the past. One may expect, therefore, some step forward in this direction, possibly at the next meeting of the United Nations in September/October. The real difficulty now in the mind of U.S. leaders is not the positive aspect of the inclusion of the People's Government of China, but rather the exclusion of Chiang Kai-shek. Informally, suggestions have been made by the United States that China should be taken into the United Nations but not in the Security Council, and that India should take her place in the Security Council. We cannot of course accept this as it means falling out with China and it would be very unfair for a great country like China not to be in the Security Council. We have, therefore, made it clear to those who suggested this that we cannot agree to this suggestion. We have even gone a little further and said that India is not anxious to enter the Security Council at this stage, even though as a great country she ought to be there. The first step to be taken is for China to take her rightful place and then the question of India might be considered separately.

# VI

# EULOGIES

БИБЛИОТЕКА
АН

The following excerpts cover Nehru's messages marking the passing away of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Asaf Ali and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. The death of each figure offered an opportunity for self-reflection and internal inquiry, reminding Nehru of their service to India and of the urgent trials that lay ahead.

*From a letter dated 5 February 1948*

When I wrote to you last, Gandhiji was in the middle of his fast. A little more than two weeks have elapsed since then, and yet it seems as if it was distant ages ago, for so much has happened and all of us have experienced shock and unutterable pain. The suddenness and magnitude of what has happened benumbed us for a while, and yet we felt immediately that we have to take action and swift action.*

You are already aware of some action that we have taken. You must have seen the resolution issued by the Government of India on this tragedy and know that we have banned the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh organisation. Investigations are proceeding. But enough has come to light already to show that this assassination

* Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on 30 January 1948.

was not the act of just an individual or even a small group. It is clear that behind him lay a fairly widespread organisation and deliberate propaganda of hate and violence carried on for a long time. It is significant that for the first time after a long period we should have political assassination in India and that too on the highest level. Even apart from Gandhiji's death by such assassination, the fact that there are people in this country who have adopted this method to gain political ends is of the gravest import. Perhaps we have been too lenient in dealing with these various elements in the country. We have suffered for that. But it is time that we gripped the problem fully and dealt with it adequately. There can be no half measures.

It would appear that a deliberate *coup d'etat* was planned involving the killing of several persons and the promotion of general disorder to enable the particular group concerned to seize power. The conspiracy appears to have been a fairly widespread one, spreading to some of the states. It is not proper for me now to say much more about this except to warn you of its widespread ramifications.

I am and have been a believer in civil liberty and the democratic processes, but it is absurd to talk of democracy when the very basis of it is challenged by terroristic activities; it is equally absurd for civil liberty to be granted to those who wish to seize power by murder and violence. Therefore, we are compelled to take action to restrict certain liberties of groups and individuals in order that the people generally should not be deprived of all liberty. I will suggest to you therefore to take every possible step to meet this grave situation and to root out the evil that confronts us. We must remember that the people opposed to us are thoroughly unscrupulous. They will say one thing and do another. I have had messages of condolence from some persons of note who are

believed to be associated in this conspiracy. I cannot, therefore, just take any person's word for granted. It is fairly well-known that attempts have been made, and these have met with some success in having cells of these conspirators in all manner of governmental places, services, etc. We shall have to purge these and purify our administration and services.

The popular reaction to the murder is understandable. It was scandalous in the extreme that any person in India should have the temerity and the meanness to celebrate by distribution of sweets or by slogans the assassination of Gandhiji. If the mass of the people resented this and took action of their own accord, I can understand it, and even appreciate it to some extent. But it is clear that any widespread disorder plays into the hands of our enemies and weakens such action as government might take and are taking. Unfortunately some people have encouraged this disorder and rather exploited it for particular purposes. While one can understand spontaneous action for a while, one cannot appreciate the exploitation of this sentiment. This kind of thing can only lead to civil strife on a large scale and a confusion of issues. We have many currents and crosscurrents agitating the stream of Indian life today. The ending of British rule released many forces and we saw the terrible Punjab disaster. Some of these forces gathered strength exploiting that disaster and they have now done this evil deed. The death of Mahatma Gandhi, who was the tremendous cementing force of India, has again weakened our political and social fabric. At this moment, the first essential is that we must hold together and subordinate our minor differences in order to face the common peril. . . .

Your Governor has been given an urn containing a small part of Gandhiji's ashes. He has been asked to deliver this to you. The major

part of the ashes will be immersed at the junction of the Ganga and Jamna in Allahabad on the 12th February. It is suggested that some part of the ashes should be immersed on the same day, if possible, in the other major rivers of India. It is for this purpose that we have sent you these ashes through your Governor. I hope you will make suitable arrangements for this ceremony.

*From a letter dated 3 March 1948*

During the last fortnight we have slowly recovered from the shock of Mahatma Gandhi's death. We can never wholly recover from it, but inevitably life demands that we should carry on our normal activities. Throughout this past month, I have been deluged with messages of sympathy and condolence on Gandhiji's death. I have personally received over fifteen thousand telegrams, apart from letters, and a large number of these have come from foreign countries. It is astonishing how the world has reacted to Gandhiji's death. Great as he was in his life, his death and the manner of it suddenly made the world realise what a mighty person had left us. Many of the messages received are far from being formal ones. They are moving and eloquent tributes from the heart. We feel today, even more than we ever did before, the universality of Gandhiji, and we thus have this curious paradox of a person who was intensely national and yet completely international. No person who did not have this tremendous international appeal could have evoked the remarkable response that he did.

Gandhiji has gone, though his vivid personality still surrounds us, and the burden is now upon us. We have to adjust ourselves to this burden and carry it to the best of our ability. I have no doubt that in spite of difficulties we shall succeed in overcoming the many obstacles that face us. . . .

*From a letter dated 18 December 1950*

Three days ago, when I should have normally written to you this letter, a heavy blow fell upon all of us and upon India.* We shall take a long time to recover from it and, even so, there will always be a sense of emptiness for those who had the privilege of knowing and working with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The great ones pass, the warriors who led us in our struggle depart, and we all feel somewhat lonely and desolate. On those who remain, the burden and the responsibility grow heavier.

Sardar Patel was a strange mixture of single-mindedness in the pursuit of his objectives and many-sided activities. On all these activities, he has left his powerful impress, and both the Central Government and every State Government have felt, during these three or four years, the mark of a strong and guiding hand. So, in your work, you will miss him as we will miss him from day to day in our work at the Centre. You will have to do without him, for there is no one to take his place.

Sorrow and calamity may bear down upon us or encompass us. But we have to carry on, to the best of our ability, the work with which we are charged. Indeed, every calamity is a challenge to our manhood and our nationhood, and an individual or a nation is judged ultimately by the way this challenge is accepted. The entire world today is a huge question mark and a challenge. To this we have to add our own problems and difficulties. Perhaps it is true that a nation can only truly advance if it has to go through the fire from time to time. It is through this process that we ultimately attained our freedom, and it is perhaps because that process stopped that we grew soft and indolent. We see a curious spectacle around us in the world. The very success that men aim at and struggle for leads often enough to a deterioration of that vital quality which bring real progress to the

* Vallabhbhai Patel died on 15 December 1950 at Bombay.

nation. Failure or lack of success is often the spur to greater effort. Victors in war try to overreach themselves and not satisfied with what they have got, aim at more. Thus they get entangled and lose the fruits of victory. The defeated drag themselves up from the very depths of despair and make good. That surely does not mean that victory is bad and defeat good. But it does mean, I think, that both victory and defeat depend ultimately on some inner quality, and if this is lacking, then other and unforeseen consequences follow.

I am led to these thoughts when I look around the world today and when I consider the state of our own country. We have a great heritage, both old and new. But somehow we do not live up to it and grow slack and lazy and lack discipline. The great urge to go ahead in a common brotherhood of thought and action is wanting. It was this very quality of disciplined and co-ordinated action that was the great strength of Sardar Patel's life and work, and it is this that we must learn from him, above all other things. India has, I am convinced, fine material, if only we can utilize it to the best advantage, if only we can bring back to our minds the flaming ideal of service for a cause, which many of us knew in our younger days. It is not so much machinery that we want or even food or other goods from abroad, although they are desirable; what we want are men and women with a purpose and with a will to achieve and with a capacity to work together without finding too much fault with each other. We used to be criticized in days gone by and called a nation of talkers and not of men of action. That criticism faded away when Gandhiji came on the scene. Are we now reverting to our previous habits and justifying that criticism?

*From a letter dated 8 April 1953*

International events, however important, are distant and personal tragedy affects us much more. . . . Asaf Ali, our Ambassador-Minister

at Berne, died suddenly early on the 2nd April. . . . Asaf Ali's body was brought to Delhi and his funeral took place yesterday. The State honoured him in every way, but the significance of that funeral came from the multitudes of the citizens of Delhi who mourned him.

Asaf Ali occupied many high offices of State during the last six years. He was a Cabinet Minister, our first Ambassador in Washington, the Governor of a State, our Ambassador-Minister in Berne, Austria and the Vatican. But his position in India's public life transcended even these high offices, for he was one of the old band which was associated with the struggle for India's freedom ever since the end of the First World War. His loss is great from every point of view but, more especially, for those who have been his colleagues and comrades during these several decades.

He was in a sense symbolic of the old variegated culture of Delhi, which unfortunately, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. He was essentially of Delhi and, therefore, the people of Delhi were greatly attached to him. A true representative as he was of Delhi's culture, yet his was essentially a modern and active mind. Sensitive and fastidious, brought up in the tradition of the old leaders of Delhi and India, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M.A. Ansari, he was deeply pained at the occurrences in Delhi and elsewhere of August and September 1947. All that he and Delhi had stood for seemed to have been denied in those terrible days. And so, he, like many others, while rejoicing in the freedom that had crowned our efforts, carried many a wound hidden away in the recesses of his heart. He was a fine writer both in English and Urdu and some of his poems and dramatic pieces in Urdu were notable. For nearly three years he and I and some others lived in the most intimate companionship in Ahmednagar prison. There can be no better way of getting to know a person than by being in prison with him. All our virtues as well as our failings come out in the strain and abnormal atmosphere of

close confinement. Asaf Ali was ill for some time there and later, on transfer to a Punjab prison, he suffered severe illness which shook him up. He recovered gradually, but evidently he never quite got over that attack. Because of his considerable absences from India, during this formative and changing period of our national life, and even more so, from the shock of partition and after and the changes this had brought about in the texture of life in Delhi, Asaf Ali, though fitting in, had a somewhat lost look as if he was missing something he was used to. I believe he liked his latest assignment at Berne, Vienna, and the Vatican and he sent us long and interesting letters and reports. He was looking forward greatly to a conference we intend having at Lucerne in Switzerland in June next. This conference is meant for the Heads of our Missions in Europe. We are having these regional conferences and find them very helpful. Asaf Ali was particularly in charge of the Lucerne Conference and was taking a personal interest in the arrangements for it. I was myself greatly looking forward to this visit to Lucerne where I would meet him and others and discuss this changing scene in international affairs and try to understand it. He died suddenly with practically no advance warning and when he appeared to be in tolerable health. His wife had joined him only the day before. Perhaps it is better to die that way and not after a lingering and painful illness. The shock and the sorrow is for others.

*From a letter dated 15 November 1954*

Much has happened during these six weeks. The death of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai has been a great blow. It is never easy to measure men because there are not uniform standards for such measurement. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was a particularly difficult person to assess because he was different from others. One test comes after death, the measure of

popular reaction. I was not in India when he died, but I am told that his death provoked an extraordinary amount of public sorrow all over the country. More especially in Delhi, his funeral procession drew vast numbers of persons of all shades of opinion. I am not surprised to learn this because I knew that he was one of the very few who had by sheer hard work and ability won an abiding place in the hearts of our countrymen. He was essentially a man of the people and because of that they put up with much in him that would have irritated in others. I knew him from the early beginnings of the non-cooperation movement thirty-five years ago and we had worked together during this long period through all the ups and downs that came to us. We were in prison together and we were in the struggle together outside, and later we were in the Government together. A politician is well known to be used to public speaking, and perhaps even to like it. Rafi Ahmed for many years always avoided a public speech even though he was playing a most important part in our organization. Public speaking was always somewhat of a trial to him and he avoided it, if possible. He expanded in small groups. He concentrated on hard organizational work and knew personally more persons in the U.P. and even in India than anyone else that I know of. He was a loyal friend and was always willing to help anyone in distress. Innumerable people came to him for help. No person was turned away.

These were the qualities that endeared him not only to his numerous comrades but to the people at large. But behind these qualities was a sterling ability and a quickness of mind and grasp. He had a sense of what the people were thinking and had initiative and daring.

He was a Muslim of course but one never thought of him in terms of being confined to any community. He was an Indian patriot in the best sense of the word and his patriotism embraced the whole people and, therefore, he thought always in terms of the good of

the masses. No number of rules or regulations or even working as a Cabinet Minister tamed his unconventional spirit.

He helped innumerable persons, but for himself he did little. The land he possessed he gave away to his tenants. His house in his village home Masauli in the District of Bara Banki, U.P., continued to be a dilapidated structure, in some parts even lacking a roof. He had no time or money to look after it.

Such a man is unique anywhere and in the India of today his loss is indeed great. I feel it particularly, not only because a friend and comrade is gone, but because we have come to a stage in India when initiative and daring are necessary more than ever.

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between 1985 and 1989. Those readers who, by way of the following excerpts, are moved to further understand Nehru and his India should refer to that complete edition. Some notes have been borrowed from the original collection.

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